

# A MAN'S WORLD: FEMALE CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS IN NEW ZEALAND MEN'S PRISONS

A SOCIAL HISTORY

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## Abstract

As an influx of women entered the workforce in the 1960s, many began to emerge in what were considered traditionally male occupations: as policewomen, military personnel, and as correctional officers. In New Zealand, female officers have long been employed in women's prisons, however, the first female officer employed in a men's prison was in 1985, at Wi Tako Prison. Following this, women have steadily been introduced into this role.

Although international literature, particularly in the US is available, little research has been undertaken in New Zealand around the employment of female correctional officers in men's prisons. This thesis seeks to fill this gap, by producing a comprehensive social history of the emergence of female correctional officers in New Zealand, and the impact these officers have had. Despite the role of correctional officers once often being considered as a solely male occupation, this thesis establishes that the introduction of female officers into men's facilities in New Zealand from 1985 has had a positive impact.

Using a comprehensive analysis of sources this thesis outlines the factors leading to the influx of women into the workforce in the 1960s, before providing an in depth history of female correctional officers both internationally and in New Zealand. Basing its conclusions mainly on qualitative data, this thesis argues that female officers had a significant impact on men's prisons, in regard to inmates, fellow officers and administration, and the overall prison environment.

The research undertaken for this thesis involved a historical analysis of government papers and legislation, New Zealand archives, newspaper articles, international and New Zealand literature, department reports, and information gained under the Official Information Act from the last century. This was accompanied by thirteen comprehensive interviews with retired New Zealand correctional officers, both male and female.

*This thesis is dedicated to Betty Elaine Dowd.*

*(1936 – 2012)*

*Grandma, you always inspired me to never give up and to seek greatness.*

*I miss you dearly, but I know you're always with me.*

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Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisors, Heather Wolfram and Greg Newbold, for their continual guidance and wisdom throughout this process. Heather, your reassuring emails and never ending support made this thesis such an enjoyable experience. Greg, your undergraduate courses are what inspired my passion for crime and corrections, and it has truly been an honour to be a student of yours.

A special thank you also for those who participated in the interviews used throughout this thesis, your first-hand experiences and knowledge were invaluable, and I am so grateful to each one of you for taking the time to share your story with me.

Thank you to my family, friends, and my partner Jack who have supported me unconditionally. I could not have done it without you all behind me and I am truly grateful for each and every one of you.

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## Notes & Abbreviations

AJHR – Appendixes to the House of Representatives  
NZDF – New Zealand Defence Force  
NZH – New Zealand Herald  
NZPD – New Zealand Parliamentary Debates

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Prior to 1995, penal institutions, the probation system and the courts around New Zealand and their staff, all fell under the authority of the Department of Justice. However, the Department of Justice (Restructuring) Act 1995 gave management of prisoners, parolees and offenders on probation to the Department of Corrections; fines collection and overall administration of the courts system was left under the control of the Ministry of Justice. The intention of this restricting was to enable the new government department to improve public safety and assist in the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders.

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### Correctional Facilities in New Zealand

#### **Current Men's Facilities:**

Auckland Prison (*Often referred to as Paremoremo Prison*)  
Auckland South Corrections Facility  
Christchurch Men's Prison (*Often referred to as Paparua Prison*)  
Hawkes Bay Regional Prison (*Previously called Mangaroa Prison, built to replace Napier Prison*)  
Invercargill Prison  
Manawatu Prison (*Often referred to as Linton Prison*)  
Mount Eden Corrections Facility  
Northland Region Corrections Facility (*Often referred to as Ngawha Prison*)  
Otago Corrections Facility  
Rimutaka Prison (*Previously called Wi Tako Prison*)  
Rolleston Prison  
Springs Hill Corrections Facility  
Tongariro Prison  
Waikeria Prison  
Wanganui Prison (*Often referred to as Kaitoke Prison*)

#### **Current Women's Facilities:**

Arohata Girls Borstal/Women's Prison  
Auckland Region Women's Correctional Facility  
Christchurch Women's Prison (*Often referred to as Paparua Women's Prison*)

#### **Recently Closed Men's Facilities:**

Addington Prison (1874-1999)  
Dunedin Prison (1898-2007)  
Napier Prison (1862-1993)  
New Plymouth Prison (1886-2013)  
Ohura Prison (1972-2005)  
Rangipo Prison (1925-2015)  
Waikune Prison (1914-1986)  
Wellington Prison (1927-2012) (*Often referred to as Mt Crawford Prison*)

# 1

## Introduction

During the latter half of the 20th century, women began to be employed in areas considered male dominated, such as the police force, and areas of the military. As part of this trend, discussions around female correctional officers in men's prisons began. Although recognised as the first country to give women the right to vote in 1893, New Zealand lagged in other areas, such as the employment of females within the criminal justice system and law enforcement. Whilst other countries, such as the United States, Australia, and Britain, employed female officers in both men's and women's prisons from the early 1970s, New Zealand did not follow suit until 1985, when Celia Lashlie was hired to work at Wi Tako prison, a minimum-security men's prison near Wellington, now known as Rimutaka prison.

In 1985, Geoffrey Palmer, Labour's Minister of Justice, announced the establishment of a working party to plan for the integration of male and female prison officers, highlighting the department's participation in programs designed to promote and implement equal employment opportunities in association with the Ministry of Women's Affairs. Prior to this, over 70 percent of working women were found in traditionally female occupations, such as clerical work, nursing, teaching, and sales, whilst men became doctors, engineers, or police officers. In 1987, the Justice Department decided to employ at least one female officer to every prison in New Zealand, leading to 90 females being employed within men's prisons by 1989. Subsequently, the employment of females as correctional officers grew immensely.

The role of a correctional officer is outlined in *the Penal Institutions Regulations 1961* as being "...in the control of inmates, Officers shall seek to influence them through example and leadership and to enlist their willing cooperation."<sup>1</sup> According to New Zealand's Department of Corrections (2019), "Corrections officers are responsible for the safe, secure and humane containment of prisoners and for

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<sup>1</sup> Bob Gidlow. *Dirty Work*. (Christchurch, New Zealand: University of Canterbury, 1972), 6.



actively motivating them to make positive changes in their lives.”<sup>2</sup> In the media, whether it be on television or in films, correctional officers are commonly referred to as ‘guards’ or ‘wardens’ and are stereotypically painted as unforgiving and unsympathetic. Such assumptions fail to capture the people behind the uniform. Given this perception, many view this role as unsuitable for women due to their assumed lack of physical and psychological fitness. From the public’s perspective, the role has been viewed as a simple task, requiring no more than the ability to open doors and count heads, with inmates kept in line through easily followed routines.

However, this is not the case, as both the physical and psychological demands that are fundamental in correctional work can create considerable stress for officers. Correctional officers often spend more time with inmates than anyone else, so they play a key role in encouraging them to attend and complete their rehabilitation and education programs, trade training and other programs. In this way, officers contribute to reducing re-offending. Most new recruits are unfamiliar with the complex demands of the job and lack of preparedness by recruits even after training, calls for a dramatic adjustment during the first months of employment. Although prisons take on partial responsibility of educating, training, and rehabilitating inmates, a correctional officer’s primary duties are the supervision of inmates, and the maintenance of security, order, and discipline.

Given the perception, upon their introduction, that women were not suited to this male-dominated occupation, this thesis seeks to establish just what the impact of the introduction of females was in the New Zealand context, and how this initial perception has changed. An in-depth understanding of the social context, legislation, reaction, and experience of those involved in the emergence of females in this conventionally male role is essential to fully comprehend the actions, reactions, and impact of females. Moreover, the predicted benefits and/or problems surrounding female officers that were outlined in 1985 will also be examined to see if any were realised, or whether other unpredicted problems or benefits were discovered.

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<sup>2</sup> “Corrections Officer,” Department of Corrections, Accessed 14 Feb 2019, via: [https://www.corrections.govt.nz/about\\_us/working\\_with\\_us/careers/types\\_of\\_careers/offender\\_facing\\_roles/corrections\\_officer2.html](https://www.corrections.govt.nz/about_us/working_with_us/careers/types_of_careers/offender_facing_roles/corrections_officer2.html).

This thesis will give a detailed description of the influx of women entering the workforce from the 1960s before providing a history of female correctional officers both in New Zealand and overseas, and an analysis of female correctional officers in New Zealand in regard to their increase in numbers and their overall impact. The impact of female officers, both positive and negative, will also be examined and, using international research, comparisons will be drawn with the impact that the introduction of female officers has had in other jurisdictions.

Whilst undertaking this research I soon realised the potential for confusion around the names of prisons around New Zealand, as some have been replaced, or the name has been changed. Therefore, a list of New Zealand prisons, both currently open and closed, has been provided in the notes section.

### Historiography

Contributions to the scholarship around female correctional officers have come from a range of disciplines and have been undertaken using methodologies from case-specific studies, or have focused on key aspects, such as the impact of female officers, female officers' responses to conflict, and their impact on prisons and the prison environment. Although female officers have been well studied internationally through these methods, little has been written about female correctional officers in New Zealand.

Most relevant is Greg Newbold's 2005 paper 'Women Officers Working in Men's Prisons,' which examines the recent history of female correctional officers in New Zealand from the 1980s and the debates that ensued as a result. Newbold also provides a comparison of New Zealand's situation to that of the US, where female correctional officers have been enlisted since 1972. Newbold uses newspaper articles, National statistics, *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives*, and sources from New Zealand's Department of Corrections within his work.<sup>3</sup>

In Australia, case-specific studies have been conducted, as seen in 'Women Doing a Man's Job: Female Prison Officers Working in a Male Prison,' by Louise Farnworth (1992). Farnworth discusses

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<sup>3</sup> Greg Newbold, "Women Officers Working in Men's Prisons," *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand/Te Puna Whakaaro*, no. 25 (2005).

the integration of female officers into Pentridge prison, an Australian facility with a 'traditionally male prison environment.' Farnworth's study found key issues that formed the basis of resentment by male officers, resulting in integration difficulties for female officers, including strip searching male inmates and managing violent inmates.<sup>4</sup>

Most literature dealing with female officers originates from the US, including one of the most influential works: Lynn Zimmer's frequently cited 1986 study 'Women Guarding Men'. Here, various approaches of female officers are explored through interviews with 70 female officers in minimum, medium, and maximum-security prisons. Zimmer identifies distinct methods used by female officers, which she attributes to the women working in a non-traditional, predominantly male occupation. Zimmer outlines three "female strategies" used by female officers in coping with the difficult work environment: the modified role, the institutional role, and inventive role.

In a separate 1987 paper, Zimmer examines the 'subtle but insidious' forms of bias female correctional officers face in the devaluation of their approaches to their job, from those in managerial positions, fellow officers, and male inmates.<sup>5</sup> In this article, Zimmer argues that when the female officers think, act, or approach problems, their actions are compared to their male counterparts and are subsequently devalued. It would be beneficial for the approaches of female officers to be valued, because they differ from male approaches, and to be judged independently. Occupational problems again explored by Zimmer in 1989, highlight the progress to be achieved through legal action, and the key to successful integration for female officers.<sup>6</sup>

Several international studies have been completed on the impact of female officers. A longitudinal study in the US by Crouch and Alpert (1982) reports changes in punitive and aggressive attitudes over the first six months of employment as a correctional officer.<sup>7</sup> Drawn from a larger study by Crouch

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<sup>4</sup> Louise Farnworth, "Women Doing a Man's Job: Female Prison Officers Working in a Male Prison," *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology* 25 (1992).

<sup>5</sup> Lynn Zimmer, "How Women Reshape the Prison Guard Role," *Gender & Society* 1, no. 4 (1987).

<sup>6</sup> Lynn Zimmer, "Solving Women's Employment Problems in Corrections: Shifting the Burden to Administrators," *Women & Criminal Justice* 1, no. 1 (1989).

<sup>7</sup> Ben M. Crouch and Geoffrey P. Alpert, "Sex and Occupational Socialization among Prison Guards: A Longitudinal Study," *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 9, no. 2 (1982).

(1980), the study hypothesises two clusters of variables which could theoretically explain changes in an officer's attitudes: fundamental characteristics of the individual, and the characteristics of the specific institution at which the officers are employed. Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews, and demonstrate the strong influence of gender on punitiveness and aggression and that, whilst male officers became more punitive and aggressive, females became less so.<sup>8</sup>

In 1984, Nancy Jurik and Gregory Halembe looked at experiences on the job as determinants of job satisfaction.<sup>9</sup> These authors discuss the job model vs. gender model debate which is often highlighted in situations where females are working in a male dominated area.<sup>10</sup> Data for their analysis were drawn from an examination of work and training-related attitudes among officers and collected through observation and self-administered questionnaires. Jurik and Halembe's study failed to obtain evidence to support the utilisation of gender as a primary explanatory variable of job satisfaction for a correctional officer.

In 2000, Mary Ann Farkas examined the supervisory style of correctional officers in an exploratory study involving in depth interviews using hypothetical incidences.<sup>11</sup> Farkas's study in the US, involved 79 state correctional officers, 72.1 percent of whom were male and, as with Jurik and Halembe's 1984 study, Farkas references the gender model v. job model debate. The results show that male and female officers overwhelmingly agreed with the perception that they approach the job differently. Male officers characterized female officers' approaches as less aggressive, less assertive, and too personal, whilst the female officers viewed their approaches as more humane, personal, and service-orientated.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Crouch and Alpert, "Sex and Occupational Socialization among Prison Guards," 164.

<sup>9</sup> Nancy C Jurik and Gregory J Halembe, "Gender, Working Conditions and the Job Satisfaction of Women in a Non-Traditional Occupation: Female Correctional Officers in Men's Prisons," *Sociological Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (1984).

<sup>10</sup> The gender model is used to argue that because of prior socialization into family roles, females are less involved in their work and less committed to their careers than men, disinterested in the intrinsic aspects of their work, more concerned with friendships than organisational influence, and more willing to submit to bureaucratic subordination and less concerned with autonomy than men. In contrast, the job model explains work related attitudes being grounded in the immediate job situation and the worker's subjective reaction.

<sup>11</sup> Mary Ann Farkas, "Inmate Supervisory Style: Does Gender Make A Difference?" *Women and Criminal Justice* 10, no. 4 (2000).

<sup>12</sup> Farkas, "Inmate Supervisory Style," 42-43.

Farkas' findings both supported and negated these assumptions. For example, female and male officers responded similarly to conflict situations, both calling for backup. This may be explained by the standard procedures introduced in their training, neutralising any gender differences. Interestingly, the gender differences that were found within Farkas' study contradicted widely held beliefs: men were more likely to talk to an inmate refusing to move and find the underlying cause, whilst a female officer was more likely to assert her authority and write a conduct report. This response may indicate the perceived need for a female officer to prove themselves capable.<sup>13</sup> Comments from many female officers validated this concern.<sup>14</sup>

A study in the US by Mark Pogrebin and Eric Poole in 1998 focuses on what is almost entirely lacking from previous research: the impact of employment on the women officers themselves.<sup>15</sup> Through semi-structured interviews with 108 female deputies, there was "a pervasive expectation that jail guards should act in a manner consistent with the sex role expectations of the traditional male employee."<sup>16</sup> Female officers may use different means to achieve the same outcome as male officers; however, their job performance outcome was then compared negatively in comparison to their male counterparts. The techniques used by the female officers challenged the traditional male norms of maintaining security and control, especially in potentially hostile and volatile situations. Pogrebin and Poole conclude that to realize the needed change in workplace culture is to dissolve the hierarchal control mechanisms and eliminate administrative pressures for worker uniformity which serve to reinforce and maintain traditional job stereotypes in the prison setting.<sup>17</sup>

In their US study in 2003, Victor Savicki, Eric Cooley, and Jennifer Gjesvold examined harassment as a predictor of job burnout and stress for correctional officers.<sup>18</sup> The hypotheses, based on earlier

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<sup>13</sup> Farkas, "Inmate Supervisory Style," 43.

<sup>14</sup> The findings of her study cannot be generalized to all female correctional officers, due to the limited sample and inmate population. Farkas also highlights the potential influence of race and supervisory style. Empirical measures such as direct observation are needed to confirm unique supervisory styles by gender.

<sup>15</sup> Mark R Pogrebin and Eric D Poole, "Women Deputies and Jail Work," *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 14, no. 2 (1998).

<sup>16</sup> Pogrebin and Poole, "Women Deputies and Jail Work," 130.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Victor Savicki, Eric Cooley, and Jennifer Gjesvold, "Harassment as a Predictor of Job Burnout in Correctional Officers," *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 30, no. 5 (2003).

literature, were that female officers will experience more harassment than male officers, and that harassment will add to the predicted burnout, organisational commitment, and experienced stress, which will not be found in male officers. Although a detailed sexual harassment measure was not used, it was clear that harassment was much higher for females, played a greater role in the experience of burnout, is a significant contributor to levels of perceived stress, and was influential in reducing organisational commitment and in increasing intentions to leave for women.<sup>19</sup>

In the US in 2005, Nancy Hogan et al., examined the difference between female and male officers in defining and responding to conflicts.<sup>20</sup> Specifically, it was assumed male correctional officers' actions would support masculine beliefs in defining and responding to conflict, whilst female officers would also conform to assumptions about their capabilities. The results of the study found male and female officers define and respond to perceived conflict with a similar approach; the sex of the inmate held significance in shaping the officers' decisions, with both males and females in the study outlining an increased risk with male inmates. These results challenge previous literature which claims the importance of gender, rather than ability, particularly the myth that men and women respond to conflict differently.<sup>21</sup>

In England, Alison Liebling and David Price's 2001 book *The Prison Officer* offers insight into less-studied aspects of the introduction of female correctional staff looking at the impact of female staff on inmates or the inmate environment, as well as their impact on shaping the meaning of prison work.<sup>22</sup> Liebling and Price also discuss the need for strict boundaries and the potential for inappropriate relationships between female staff and male inmates.

The hiring of female officers within men's prisons was a major change, making it important to determine the effect of this innovation on the daily operation and function of such institutions. In the

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<sup>19</sup> Savicki, Cooley, and Gjesvold, "Harassment as a Predictor of Job Burnout in Correctional Officers," 617.

<sup>20</sup> Nancy L Hogan, Eric B Lambert and John H Hepburn, "Is There a Difference? Exploring Male and Female Correctional Officers' Definition of and Response to Conflict Situations," *Women & Criminal Justice* 15, no. 3-4 (2005).

<sup>21</sup> See also Denise Jenne and Robert Kersting 1996 article on responses to conflict by female correctional officers.

<sup>22</sup> Alison Liebling and David Price, *The Prison Officer*, (England, Great Britain: Prison Service Journal, 2001).

US in 1980, Peter Kissel and Paul Katsampes did just this, by assessing the impact of female employment on three groups: the inmate population, the male officers, and the female officers themselves.<sup>23</sup> The research indicated that the majority of female officers felt satisfied with their job performance, as were the male staffers. Discrepancy arose, however, around the issue of crisis situations: although most female officers felt themselves capable of handling most crisis situations, the majority of inmates felt male employees would be more successful. Other potential issues identified were primarily concerned with the perceived lack of strength and size of female officers in potentially volatile situations. The majority of male staff indicated they felt the need to protect their female counterparts at least occasionally. Overall, Kissel and Katsampes' evaluation was positive, with the presence of female officers considered an asset to the functioning of the prison.<sup>24</sup>

Organisational barriers have hindered attempts at correctional reform and encouraged staff suspicions about the competence of female officers, as identified and examined in Nancy Jurik's 1985 article in the US.<sup>25</sup> This analysis describes the effect of workplace context on the advancement opportunities of female officers. An understanding of the organisational environment provides insight into the hostile responses of male co-workers and supervisors towards female officers. This further outlines that such hostility is not simply the outcome of pre-existing sexist attitudes but is also continuing behaviour perpetuated by the work environment.<sup>26</sup> Jurik's exploratory study concludes that the full integration of female officers was hindered by several barriers: informal organisational resistance and the conflicting nature of work. Therefore, the psychological traits and attitudes of supervisors, colleagues, clients and workers, cannot be considered solely responsible.

Whilst the aforementioned articles focused on the institutional barriers, other researchers have concentrated on attempts to deal with discrimination in the court system. Regarding New Zealand legislation, Grant Huscroft's 1997 article "Discrimination, Dignity, and the Limits of Equality"

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<sup>23</sup> Peter J Kissel and Paul L Katsampes, "The Impact of Women Corrections Officers on the Functioning of Institutions Housing Male Inmates," *Journal of Offender Counseling Services Rehabilitation* 4, no. 3 (1980).

<sup>24</sup> Kissel and Katsampes, "The Impact of Women Corrections Officers on the Functioning of Institutions Housing Male Inmates," 229.

<sup>25</sup> Nancy C Jurik, "An Officer and a Lady: Organizational Barriers to Women Working as Correctional Officers in Men's Prisons," *Social Problems* 32, no. 4 (1985).

<sup>26</sup> Jurik, "An Officer and a Lady," 376.

outlines the limitations of the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990.<sup>27</sup> This was intended to reduce discrimination and increase equality in areas such as employment. However, as Huscroft discusses, discrimination, like equality, is difficult to measure. After his extensive examination of cases and legislation from New Zealand and the US, Huscroft concludes that, in the absence of a theory of discrimination, we should not be surprised to find courts reaching verdicts that align with individual judges' sense of fairness.<sup>28</sup>

Mary Ann Farkas and Kathryn Rand (1997), detail several historic cases in the US where female correctional officers sought legal action for unjust discrimination in the workplace.<sup>29</sup> Farkas and Rand found that the failure of courts to analyse inmate privacy claims consistently has effectively limited employment opportunities for female correctional officers. Using court case files, Geoffrey Alpert (1984) discusses the issues raised that challenge the ability of a state to prevent women from becoming correctional officers. In Alabama for example, Diane Rawlinson was rejected as she did not meet the weight and height requirements for the job. In 1980, *Gunther v. Iowa State Men's Reformatory*, females were rejected from being employed due to the general issue of privacy for the inmate which needed to be considered. The court also had to determine "whether or not all, or substantially all, members of one gender would be unable to perform the duties of the job (for example, strength) safely and efficiently, and whether or not the essence of the task makes the hiring of only one gender a necessity."<sup>30</sup>

A 1991 article by Joanne Belknap discusses and confirms previous research on females entering corrections, with interviews of 35 female correctional officers from a large midwestern metropolitan jail in the US.<sup>31</sup> Discussion includes the reasons female correctional officers give for entering corrections, which includes wanting to become police or patrol officers, attraction to the financial

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<sup>27</sup> Grant Huscroft, "Discrimination, Dignity, and the Limits of Equality," *Otago Law Review* 9 (1997).

<sup>28</sup> Huscroft, "Discrimination, Dignity, and the Limits of Equality," 698.

<sup>29</sup> Mary Ann Farkas and Kathryn Rand, "Female Correctional Officers and Prisoner Privacy," *Marquette Law Review* 80 (1996).

<sup>30</sup> Huscroft, "Discrimination, Dignity, and the Limits of Equality," 447-48.

<sup>31</sup> Joanne Belknap, "Women in Conflict: An Analysis of Women Correctional Officers," *Women & Criminal Justice* 2, no. 2 (1991), 89.



benefits, and the perceived support from family and friends for their career choice, which varied a great deal among the women.

Building on the extant scholarship about female correctional officers, this thesis intends to examine the experiences of female officers in New Zealand who have worked within men's prisons from the mid-1980s – an area which has been relatively neglected by prior research. While Newbold's article on the introduction of female correctional officers in New Zealand provides an excellent overview, there remains ample scope for more in depth studies of the impact of women in this role. This thesis intends to provide such an analysis. Expanding on Newbold's work, this thesis includes interviews with thirteen former correctional officers, both male and female, from a variety of prisons around New Zealand. These interviews provide answers to questions such as how the women themselves experienced their role and what impact their presence had on prisoners and other colleagues. These are areas that have been considered in other national contexts, including Australia and the US, and which this thesis also sets out to explore.

## Methodology

A variety of methods was used to obtain the information needed for this thesis. The first was a thorough analysis of *Hansard*, an online database which holds transcripts of parliamentary debates from the decade being researched. These transcripts help to provide social context in New Zealand at this time. Departmental Annual Reports located in the *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives* were also thoroughly examined.

New Zealand newspapers containing articles relevant to the topic, accessed via the National Library of New Zealand, were searched for evidence of the portrayal of female officers in the public domain at the time female correctional officers were introduced, and to help understand public perception of the issue. Beyond a sense of the public debate about female correctional officers, it was important to understand how conditions in the public service shaped this role and women's experiences of it. This information was available at Archives New Zealand (Wellington), where I was able to access records and data on public service roles in New Zealand from the 1980s to the present. The archives provided

information such as the conditions of pay for female correctional officers, as well as statistics on the number of women officers, their rankings, and their location. Additionally, I was able to get copies of original job application forms for females, as well as some prison memoranda and other government documents concerning equal employment.

Memoirs which detail first-hand accounts or experiences of female correctional officers were a vital primary source base. For example, *The Journey to Prison: Who Goes and Why* by Celia Lashlie (2002) gives a first-hand account of the experience of New Zealand's first female correctional officer, who later became manager of the Christchurch Women's prison in 1997. In the book, Lashlie discussed her experience in working alongside male officers, as well as the reaction she received from inmates, staff, and the general public. The transcript from an interview conducted by Greg Newbold with Molly Molloy in 1983 is also utilised, as well as a biographical account by Molly Molloy herself from c.1980 which Newbold has.

The information obtained from all of these sources provides the framework from which I began constructing a social history of when female officers first began employment within men's institutions, and the struggles they faced. However, the main experiential-based content for this thesis was collected through interviews with previous correctional officers, both male and female.

In total, 12 interviews were conducted between September and November 2019. All interviewees were previously employed by the Department of Corrections in New Zealand as correctional officers. All interviewees were interviewed in their homes, except one which was over the telephone. I explained to each interviewee the purpose of the interview and the topic of my thesis, as well as my intention to submit the interviews to the Alexander Turnbull Library as oral histories after I had completed my work. The interviewees could choose to simply participate in the interview and for the interview not to be submitted as an oral history, and they could choose to remain anonymous in either the transcript for my thesis, the oral history, or both. All were happy for their recording to be submitted as an oral history, and one interviewee asked to remain anonymous.

Semi-structured interviews were used, with a set list of questions and key points I wished to touch on. The first questions were more to give a general background of each officer for the benefit of the oral histories, but were also useful for this thesis. I allowed the interviewees to direct the course of the interviews based on what they felt was relevant; follow up questions were asked when necessary to prompt elaboration on certain points. Each interview took around 25-45 minutes for male interviewees, and 30-60 minutes for female interviewees. One interview with a female interviewee was just under two hours.

The audio for the oral histories needed to be of good quality to be accepted by the Alexander Turnbull Library, and they were therefore recorded using a Fostex FR 2LE recorder and AKG C417PP clip-on microphones. I then transcribed each interview personally, and gave each interviewee the chance to review their transcript and make any changes, although, as outlined in the initial consent process, the audio was not edited.

The aim of the interviews was to hear the first-hand experiences of female staff, or male staff working alongside females. Furthermore, the intention was to outline the positive and negative impacts surrounding the introduction of female staff to men's prisons, as well as their continued employment. These first-hand experiences helped to paint a picture for the reader of what it was like for women who became female officers. As stated in the historiography, little New Zealand-based research has been conducted, and the topic of how the women themselves felt about their experiences has been neglected, outlining the significance of this work.

## 2

### New Zealand Women in the Workforce 1960s-1990s

In Western countries, groups like the women's movement brought about widespread transformations for women within the social, political, legal and economic spheres. In 1964, the first Women's Liberation groups began forming in the US, in the context of pre-existing movements: Anti-Vietnam War demonstrations began in 1964 and grew into a broad social movement extending over numerous years, and Black Civil Rights Movements which began in the mid-1950s, and led to the *Civil Rights Act* in 1964.<sup>1</sup> Feminism also expanded as a political force in the US, and throughout the Western world. When women's liberation ideologies arrived in New Zealand in 1970, they had a marked impact.<sup>2</sup>

During the 1960s and 1970s, some New Zealand women, influenced by feminist ideals in the US, began to question their position in relation to men, and their duty to home making and child rearing.<sup>3</sup> These women began to push for a change to their current position in society, re-identifying themselves as not just mothers and wives, but workers as well. This change was reflected by parliamentary discussions and subsequent legislation enacted during these decades, which had significant impacts on the integration of more females into the workforce.

In July 1984, the Labour Party was voted into Parliament. The austerity and conservativeness of the previous Muldoon administration was replaced by a progressive, left-leaning Labour government, led by David Lange. This also saw the end to the all-male ministerial cabinet: of the elected members of parliament, 11.6 percent were women, as were 10 percent of cabinet ministers.<sup>4</sup> The successful campaign of the Labour Party was instrumental in advancing women in the workforce. As promised

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<sup>1</sup> Greg Newbold, *Crime, Law, and Justice in New Zealand*, (New York, US: Routledge, 2016), 39.

<sup>2</sup> Jenny Carlyon and Diana Morrow, *Changing Times: New Zealand since 1945* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2013), 211.

<sup>3</sup> Carlyon and Morrow, *Changing Times*, 211.

<sup>4</sup> Jennifer Curtain and Marian Sawyer, "Oceania," in *Women in Executive Power: A Global Overview*, ed. Gretchen Bauer and Manon Tremblay (Oxon: Taylor & Francis, 2011), 52.

in the lead up to the election, several gender-based schemes were introduced as the new government sought to lessen the gender wage gap and increase the number of working women.

In 1984, the Ministry of Women's Affairs was established and sought to improve conditions for working women. The main functions of the ministry were to assess all Government policies in terms of their effect on women, and to monitor and initiate legislation and regulations to promote equality for women. The ministry was also to advise the minister on all government matters relating to women, ensure the views of women were considered in the decision making process, act as a resource centre for women, and to communicate and liaise with women around New Zealand. The ministry contributed to several important policy successes under the control of Ann Hercus, the first Minister of Women's Affairs (1984-87), whose efforts for women in cabinet were well known.<sup>5</sup>

### Women Emerging in Other Sectors in New Zealand

Not only were attitudes towards women changing towards the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but women's expectations were too. The introduction of new legislation which encouraged women into the workforce, led to the emergence of females in various areas of employment within New Zealand. Whilst many took up work within traditionally female jobs, some ventured into roles considered male dominated, and began to break the stereotypes which encased these jobs. Such jobs included working in the New Zealand Police (NZP), the military, and corrections. Examining these sectors helps to contextualise the treatment of females in corrections – seeking promotion, sexual harassment, and areas of the role considered too masculine for women – and illustrating that such treatment is not isolated to the environment of corrections.

### Female Police Officers

New Zealand was relatively late in introducing women to its police force, despite having integrated women into the vocational, social, and cultural mainstream more efficiently than most developed

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<sup>5</sup> Jennifer Curtin and Katherine Teghtsoonian, "Analyzing Institutional Persistence: The Case of the Ministry of Women's Affairs in Aotearoa/New Zealand," *Politics & Gender* 6, no. 4 (2010), 554.

nations.<sup>6</sup> A social justice argument emerged that female offenders and victims of crime should have the right to access female police officers. Moreover, another long-standing argument was that women were less likely to abuse their power and attract allegations of misconduct within police organisations. Many problems with modern policing, such as an aggressive patrol style and excessive force, are associated with a traditional male-dominated culture.<sup>7</sup>

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as in most other Western jurisdictions at the time, males often worked alone in police stations, but generally had to be married. Consequently, their wives could tend to the station in their absence, care for and search female inmates, and cook for all inmates and visiting officers. Such women were at times informally labelled ‘female searchers’ or ‘matrons’ at the larger stations and given a small stipend.<sup>8</sup> Issues within this male dominated job have been identified both in New Zealand and overseas. The most common complaints include: chivalrous attitudes among supervisory staff, discriminatory practices regarding employment, disadvantages with promotion, and a difficult work environment due to a ‘macho culture’ that exists within the police force. Moreover, sexual harassment also occurred.<sup>9</sup>

In the 1890s, the matron system was formally recognised, with the first full-time matron appointed in Wellington in 1895. The second matron was appointed in Auckland in 1897, and a third in Dunedin in the same year. In 1898, a fourth matron was appointed in Christchurch.<sup>10</sup> However, these were non-uniformed, non-sworn positions with no training, minimal pay, and no arrest powers. The full-time matrons were wives of sworn officers, with their primary duties including dealing with women and children in the courts, escorting female inmates to courts, and searching female arrestees. Despite most large cities in Northern America and some European cities having appointed female constables by 1914, only two female ‘special constables’ were employed in Australia by 1915, and the first female policewoman in England was in 1916. New Zealand resisted the trend on the grounds that

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<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth K Butler, L Thomas Winfree Jr, and Greg Newbold, "Policing and Gender: Male and Female Perspectives Among Members of the New Zealand Police," *Police Quarterly* 6, no. 3 (2003).

<sup>7</sup> Tim Prenzler, Jenny Fleming, and Amanda L King, "Gender Equity in Australian and New Zealand Policing: a Five-Year Review," *International Journal of Police Science & Management* 12, no. 4 (2010), 585.

<sup>8</sup> Butler, Winfree Jr, and Newbold, "Policing and Gender," 303.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 299.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 303.

women were temperamentally unsuited to police work.<sup>11</sup> As we will see, this perspective of females was mirrored in the 1980s with the attempt to employ females into men's prisons. Women were considered unfit for the role, mainly due to their perceived lack of strength.

In 1938, the country's first Labour Government legislated for the appointment of female constables, but opposition from the Police Commissioner delayed any action. With the pressure of intense lobbying from women's organisations however, the first 10 female trainees were employed in the New Zealand Police (NZP) in 1941.<sup>12</sup> These women were employed in the 'plain clothes' division, where it was felt their services would be most useful in interviewing female suspects and investigating opium dens, prostitution, and gambling. Butler et al. (2003) say that it was not until the mid-1960s that females began to receive the same treatment as male officers, such as equal pay, full constable status, uniforms, and being able to carry batons.<sup>13</sup>

In 1945, the pay for female police officers was 87 percent of male officers. The female officers were excluded from the first equal pay legislation in 1960, with equal pay finally granted in 1966. By 1985, there were 290 female police officers working in New Zealand.<sup>14</sup> However, Peter Tapsell, Minister of Police, stated in Parliament in August 1988 that the police service had difficulty not only recruiting but in retaining sufficient suitable female staff. He stated that aside from certain physical requirements, women were recruited on the same basis as men and then carried out the same functions as men. However, most frontline officers would probably always be men, "bearing in mind the nature of the work."<sup>15</sup>

By 2000, 15 percent of New Zealand's sworn police officers were women.<sup>16</sup> A number of workplace practices had been utilised to encourage the recruitment and retention of females within the police. Organisational equity programs of various types were becoming increasingly engrained. As seen with

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 303.

<sup>12</sup> Greg Newbold. "Women Officers Working in Men's Prisons." *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand/Te Puna Whakaaro*, no. 25 (2005), 105-17.

<sup>13</sup> Butler, Winfree Jr, and Newbold, "Policing and Gender," 305.

<sup>14</sup> NZPD, vol 474, 4872.

<sup>15</sup> NZPD, vol 491, 568.

<sup>16</sup> Butler, Winfree Jr, and Newbold, "Policing and Gender," 306.

the Department of Corrections, the NZP, as well as New Zealand Fire Service, used targeted female recruitment campaigns to achieve this.<sup>17</sup> In 2004, the NZP also introduced a series of flexible employment options with the aim of increasing female employment. These included part-time employment, as well as a number of mentoring and support schemes for female officers. These options had received little evaluation in regard to their effectiveness, however, particularly in relation to the retention of female police officers.<sup>18</sup>

In a 2003 study, Butler and her colleagues utilised information from the Human Synergistics Management Survey (completed in 1996 as part of a long term plan to ‘revitalize and reorganize’) to explore the level of gendering in New Zealand policing. The study focused on the level of job satisfaction, perception of supervisory support, and supervisory fairness.<sup>19</sup> The study addresses two overarching questions, the first providing insight into the gender and work perspectives on employment experiences, and the second controlling for additional measures, such as age, ethnicity, and level of job satisfaction which should suggest the directness and strength of these relationships.<sup>20</sup> The questionnaire contained 196 items and was self-administered in several different parts.

The first question was designed to measure perceptions of the workplace, including job satisfaction, level of perceived support, and fairness of their supervisors, and whether female and male sworn officers in the NZP were more like each other or their same-gender non-sworn cohort. Generally, the employees differed little from one another on issues related to police work and the workplace, a result consistent with contemporary research in the US and elsewhere.<sup>21</sup> The focus of the second question was to highlight certain biographical variables and views of policing may have gender-specific influences on perceptions for men and women. Butler et al.’s secondary analysis of these data found both male and female officers shared similar perspectives and outlooks regarding their job, organization, and supervisors, however, they view fairness – especially in terms of evaluating one’s

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<sup>17</sup> Paula Brough and Rachael Frame. "Predicting Police Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intentions: The Role of Social Support and Police Organisational Variables." *New Zealand Journal of Psychology* 33, no. 1 (2004), 9.

<sup>18</sup> Brough and Frame, "Predicting Police Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intentions," 9.

<sup>19</sup> Butler, Winfree Jr, and Newbold, "Policing and Gender," 310-311.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 311.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 321.



work – very differently. Therefore, policy changes were recommended, such as gender-sensitive training.<sup>22</sup>

A 2004 study by Paula Brough and Rachael Frame looked at the impact of organisational variables and individual variables on staff satisfaction and turnover criteria.<sup>23</sup> As expected, gender was largely associated with organisational variables, as female respondents produced significant relationships with both harassment and leave. The findings of the study suggest leave-taking, a form of employee withdrawal behaviour, is more common amongst female officers within the NZP. However, the correlation between taking leave and both job satisfaction and turnover intentions was not strong enough to be included in the final structural model. Instead, the psychological variables, and opposed to the police organisational variables, were the primary predictors of the criterion measures. According to Brough and Frame, “harassment was the only police organisational variable to (indirectly) predict both job satisfaction and turnover intentions.”<sup>24</sup> The study also confirmed the importance of supervisor support and training programs which targeted effective supervisor support to influence both officer satisfaction and retention levels. Brough and Frame, believed these findings were of particular importance for the retention of women in policing, in terms of effectively accepting the initial female recruit to the team.<sup>25</sup> We will see that harassment was also a factor in the retention of female correctional officers, as some faced harassment from fellow officers and/or those in management positions.

As will be seen with female correctional officers, despite challenges faced, the number of policewomen continued to increase from their introduction. In a five-year review on gender equity in Australian and New Zealand policing, written by Prenzler et al. in 2010, data showed a 1.46 percent increase in sworn female officers; 15.68 percent of the NZP were female in 2003/4, increasing to 17.14 percent in 2007/8.<sup>26</sup> However, during the same five-year period, female recruits in the NZP

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 323.

<sup>23</sup> Brough, Paula, and Rachael Frame. "Predicting Police Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intentions: The Role of Social Support and Police Organisational Variables." *New Zealand Journal of Psychology* 33, no.1 (2004), 8-18.

<sup>24</sup> Brough and Frame, "Predicting Police Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intentions," 13.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>26</sup> Prenzler, Fleming, and King, "Gender Equity in Australian and New Zealand Policing."

decreased 2.74 percent, from 26.61 percent in 2003/4 to 23.87 percent in 2007/8. Prenzler et al. state “women will never get close to parity at the sworn level without significant increases in recruit numbers.”<sup>27</sup> Additionally, the effect of the low recruitment rate was exacerbated by the resignation rate. Within the NZP, fluctuations in the rankings held by females within the NZP were also seen during this 5-year period. Females with the rank of commissioned officer decreased 1.93 percent, from 7.08 percent in 2003/4 to 5.15 percent in 2003/4; females with the rank of non-commissioned officer increase 3.21 percent, from 6.02 percent in 2003/4 to 9.23 percent in 2007/8; females with the rank of constable also increased 1.45 percent, from 18.17 percent in 2003/4 to 19.61 percent in 2007/8; no females held the rank of executive officer during this time.<sup>28</sup>

### Women in the New Zealand Defence Force

In 1942, the New Zealand Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) was formed as a government umbrella organisation to oversee the recruitment of New Zealand women for the armed forces. By 1944 the WAAC had 4600 women serving in New Zealand and overseas.<sup>29</sup> The establishment of the WAAC followed the formation of women’s branches in the navy and air force, and placed women’s service to the army on a separate footing. It allowed the Defence Department to implement its policy of employing women in New Zealand wherever possible, to release men for active service overseas. The majority of women who enlisted in the Corps were stationed in various camps throughout New Zealand, becoming full members after a six week basic training program.<sup>30</sup>

As will be seen within the corrections system and has been outlined for the New Zealand Police, the arrival of women presented a number of issues for camp officials. Separate ablutions facilities were often barren when the first recruits arrived, whilst distinct WAAC uniforms sometimes arrived well after the women.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, some men were hostile to the principle of women serving in the army. Only one training camp, at Miramar, was specifically built for the female corps, providing

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 589.

<sup>29</sup> Bronwyn Dalley, "New Zealand Royal Army Corps Association 1961-," in *Women Together*, ed. Anne Else (Wellington, New Zealand: Daphne Brasell Associates Press, 1993), 319.

<sup>30</sup> Dalley, "New Zealand Royal Army Corps Association 1961-," 320.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

accommodation for 600 women.<sup>32</sup> Women who were stationed at home served in a greater range of army duties than those who went overseas. However, these women worked in typically female occupations – welfare, hospital, clerical and administrative sections – as well as battery and artillery regiments, signallers, drivers, radio operators, and night watchers.<sup>33</sup>

In 1941, 200 women recruited by the WAAC, known as then Women's War Service Auxiliary (WWSA) at the time, left New Zealand for the Middle East, becoming the first women to serve overseas in World War II.<sup>34</sup> The Tuis, as they came to be known, worked mostly as assistants or voluntary aides in hospitals, although some were clerical assistants. Others worked in the New Zealand forces club in Cairo, to 'give it a touch of home.' Members of the WAAC served in similar roles overseas, in hospitals, clubs, and hospital ships in the Pacific, Italy, Japan, and London.<sup>35</sup> Following the cessation of hostilities in 1945, Corps members returned to mainly clerical, medical, signalling and catering factions. The corps was disbanded in 1977 after a restructuring of the defence forces, leading to the incorporation of servicewomen into the mainstream of the army.<sup>36</sup> This integration included equal pay and maternity provisions, however, women remained excluded from combat roles and trades by Defence Council Policy.<sup>37</sup>

Advancements for women continued to be made into the 1980s. The 1980 *Maternity Leave and Employment Protection Act* allows up to 26 weeks unpaid leave after the birth of a child, and prevents dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy. In 1981, a paper published on the employment of women at sea in non-combatant ships, concluded that Navy policy should permit women to serve in survey and research ships.<sup>38</sup> Women participated for the first time in Front-line Battle Tactics training overseas in

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 321.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Air Force Museum, Wāhine Toa Exhibition, Christchurch, New Zealand, May 2019.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

1982, when twelve women were on equal footing with over 100 of their male colleagues in Exercise Tropic Reef in Fiji. By March 1982, 8.7 percent of the NZDF was made up of women.<sup>39</sup>

Following the establishment of the Ministry of Women's Affairs in 1985, the government opened all non-combat flying roles to women in 1986, which led to Vicki Ryan being the first female to complete shore patrol.<sup>40</sup> Also in 1986, the first female soldiers, alongside 15 of their male colleagues, made a military parachute descent into the Waitemata Harbour. Shortly after, in 1987, women were accepted for pilot training in the air force, and by 1988, women were allowed to fly combat aircraft and train for combat (but not serve in combat situations). Women were also now eligible to do any job within the RNZAF. From January 1989, all female entrants have been required to serve at sea as Navy Order 35/1989 authorised the permanent employment of women at sea.<sup>41</sup>

The Report of the Gender Integration audit of the New Zealand Defence Force in October 1988 found that women were not yet fully accepted.<sup>42</sup> The view of men and women differed overall on the major reasons why women were not as well represented in the Defence Force. These differences appeared to be mediated by occupation and demographic characteristics, as well as staff's experiences in their current workplace and in other organisations. Determining whether conservative or traditional attitudes about the appropriate roles for men and women actually translated into decisions that had a negative impact on women was not a straightforward matter, as "there are a lot of unseen decisions made" one female officer commented during the report interviews, "It's hard to measure something like that."<sup>43</sup> A senior officer in the army commented:

...the military is probably the most conservative organisation, slow to change, the last bastion of conservatism and all the rest of it. Which makes it very easy to also become a sort of a clone type of organisation. People who get promoted are promoted by people who have got into a position because their traits were pretty similar to the [people who promoted them].

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Burton, *Report of the Gender Integration Audit of the New Zealand Defence Force*. (Wellington, New Zealand: Government Printer, 1998), 5.

<sup>43</sup> Burton, *Report of the Gender Integration Audit of the New Zealand Defence Force*, 6.

Now we keep looking for individual capabilities and personal strengths and that sort of thing, and in the past we generally have been looking at males. We haven't been looking at too many females, they tend not to get past a major that is getting into unit command areas.<sup>44</sup>

As will be seen with the integration of female correctional officers into what was once considered a very male dominated role, the view that masculine institutional ethos is prevalent within military units has been the subject of many reports, articles and books globally; "the business of war in societies such as New Zealand had previously been regarded as a matter for male, not female, warriors."<sup>45</sup> This view was associated, too, with characteristics, which were "more likely to be manifested in, and attributed to men, not to women."<sup>46</sup> The senior male officers who were supportive of gender integration put forward a range of reasons for this state of affairs within their services. Officers who believed they were operating in a gender-neutral fashion may have been working, not necessarily consciously, with 'sex-role stereotypes' in their heads. These were harder to turn off when daily experience of women's roles reinforced the traditional stereotype: women were either in the home as wives and mothers or at the workplace, but were not to be found in large numbers in traditionally male-dominated occupations, trades, and jobs.<sup>47</sup>

For women, this meant that to be accepted into the armed forces, they felt they had to 'fit' into the male way of doing things; that the weight of adjustment was on them. One female officer stated:

The overriding impression you get is that the guys feel put out that they have to make a change. They consistently tell us that we have to change, and we have to accommodate to their ideas and if we want to get on, then the onus is on us to change. But if you even suggest that they change a little bit it's like the greatest burden and hardship you could possibly impose on them.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 9.

Many women felt they could not be successful either way: they were expected to be feminine, yet were, at the same time, expected to conform to the established norms and expectations of a military that had been, and was still, overwhelmingly for men.

The 1998 Report of the Gender Integration Audit of the New Zealand Defence Force assessed whether attitudinal barriers were a systematic barrier on gender integration.<sup>49</sup> Opinions varied on this matter. For some, there was an issue of conservatism and the prevalence of old fashioned views regarding women within some parts of the NZDF, as opposed to more general issues around behaviours and practices which may have hindered the progress of women on a general basis. Overall, personnel in the army and air force believed the attitudes and practices of individuals, rather than institutionalised attitudes of categories or groups of people such as male senior non-commissioned officers (SNCOs) impeded the process of gender integration within their respective services. One female officer commented, “It’s more personalities rather than specifically SNCOs or senior officers. I believe there was a group of senior officers – this is early on in the piece – but basically I believe we’ve got more educated people right across the board coming through.”<sup>50</sup> In contrast, there are those who believed no real problem exists in the gender integration process within the NZDF. Those who held this view tended to be senior, male officers and (SNCOs) within each of the services.<sup>51</sup> Additionally, some within the other ranks with very short periods of service had come across little in the way of problems with gender integration, and considered it not to be a ‘big issue’ as ‘people just get on with it.’

Despite their employment, women were still partly restricted in their roles until 1992, when the army commenced a trial period of integrating female soldiers into frontline combat positions. However, it was the navy which, in 1993, was the first NZDF service to open combat roles to women, as they became able to serve on all navy vessels, combat or non-combat.<sup>52</sup> HMNZS *Wellington* was the first frigate to take women into a combat zone, when it was deployed to the Arabian Gulf as part of the

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>52</sup> Air Force Museum, Wāhine Toa Exhibition.

multi-national interception force. A review of the good working relationships in the Defence Force however, reported on the sexual and racial harassment found across the Force, which led to the implementation of policy and procedures to deal with this issue. In 1997, the Defence Force issued policy on equal employment opportunities and the prevention of harassment and discrimination.<sup>53</sup> In 1999, Chief of Defence Force AM Carey Adamson announced the NZDF would no longer use the *Human Rights Act* to prevent women from going into combat. Additionally, in 2000, the restrictions on women serving in combat were abolished across the NZDF through Defence Force Order 05/2000. This order was reflected in legislation passed by the government in 2007, allowing women's full participation in front-line combat roles.<sup>54</sup> By 2013, NZDF employed 1103 Regular Force and 1252 civilian women, representing 15 percent of all Regular Force personnel and 45 percent of civilian employees.<sup>55</sup>

There are several reasons why increasing the number of women in the NZDF is beneficial. From an operational perspective, women give the services a more flexible workforce, as many male soldiers are limited in a way that females are not. Fifty percent of civilians that come into contact with the NZDF when deployed are female, and in much of New Zealand's area of influence, cultural restrictions prohibit females from having any contact with males outside of their family, such as women in some Muslim communities, who are not allowed to talk to any males. In 2017, the Female Engagement Team (FET) launched in the New Zealand Special Air Services Regiment, tasked with the development of employment capabilities within the wider NZDF.<sup>56</sup> The primary role of this team is to engage with local female and adolescent populations present at Special Operations Forces (SOF) objectives, in scenarios where such engagement would be culturally unacceptable for a male SOF soldier to perform.<sup>57</sup> Operational experience has demonstrated the power of employing females to

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> The Ministry of Defence. *Military Women in the New Zealand Defence Force*. (Wellington, New Zealand: Government Printer, 2014), 8.

<sup>56</sup> Ministry of Defence. *Military Women in the New Zealand Defence Force*. 8,

<sup>57</sup> *Army People Magazine*, Issue 485, August 2017.

engage in all aspects of societies, especially women and children, with recent examples including Bougainville, East Timor, and Afghanistan.<sup>58</sup>

Women reported that a few key issues made them less likely to remain in the NZDF, including family issues, the organisation's internal financial and political constraints, and unpredictability such as having to relocate; often it was a combination of these issues.<sup>59</sup> Both the family and the military are considered 'greedy' organisations, as they demand time and commitment from individuals. The concept of the greedy organization has been borrowed from greedy institutions theory, and has previously been extended in the literature to include other organizations. According to Coser (1974), 'Greedy institutions' describe the characteristics of such institutions as the church, the armed forces and the family. Certain institutions make "total claims on their members" and "seek exclusive and undivided loyalty."<sup>60</sup> They make significant demands on members' time and rely heavily on compliance using mechanisms for "activating loyalty and commitment."<sup>61</sup>

In New Zealand, as outlined in a 2014 document by the Ministry of Defence, this commitment to work has been identified as one of the most critical retention issues, for both men and women. Notably, this was an issue for those with more senior, and therefore more demanding roles, as many people were having children later on in life.<sup>62</sup> Operational requirements usually took priority over family needs. Whilst part-time work was considered not possible due to the nature of the work for some units, some women felt they could transfer to another unit if they needed to work part time. There can often be a cap of only two or three people who can be on leave at any one time in a unit. In contrast, women identified a variety of reasons for choosing to remain employed by the NZDF, including people and friendships, opportunities for advancement, opportunities for sport, and feeling proud to be serving New Zealand.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> The Ministry of Defence, *Military Women in the New Zealand Defence Force*, 23.

<sup>60</sup> Rosaria Burchielli, Timothy Bartram, and Rani Thanacoody, "Work-Family Balance or Greedy Organizations?," *Relations Industrielles/Industrial Relations* 63, no. 1 (2008), 112.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> The Ministry of Defence, *Military Women in the New Zealand Defence Force*, 23.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.



Women are overrepresented in support trades, such as hospitality and logistics, and branches, such as the Infantry or Armoured Corps. This means most women who are currently serving are restricted from entering the top ranks of the organisation as they did not join the combat/operational trades when they entered, and women coming to the organisation are still not gaining access to the trades that will lead to the highest ranks in the organisation.<sup>64</sup> Though most people were able to change trades or branches early in their career if desired. In some cases, the opportunity to join the combat/operations trades has not been encouraged for women, particularly smaller women, the same as it was for men due to concerns over potential physical limitations and injuries. However, the majority of recruiters reported they treat women and men equally, but help candidates choose a trade in which they believe that person will be successful and remain in for the long-term. If the status quo is maintained it is unlikely that these restrictions will change, and it may well be generations before a woman is Chief of the Defence Force.<sup>65</sup>

Regarding pay equity, remuneration (analysed from a group of new recruits as they progressed in their career) was nearly equitable for women of other ranks until they reached seven years, when their remuneration began to sharply decline in comparison to their male peers. For female officers, following initial instability, a trend of higher pay than men tapered off after nine years of service. A factor influencing this is trade; as mentioned, women tend to be in support rather than technical or combat/operational trades.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 33.

# 3

## International History of Women in Corrections

This chapter looks at the emergence of female correctional officers internationally. As previously discussed, female officers were employed in men's prisons relatively late in New Zealand, compared to other Western nations. An exploration of female correctional officers internationally serves three purposes. First, it gives a sense of the context into which female officers emerged in other countries. Second, it provides a clearer idea of whether the experiences of female officers were universal or unique to New Zealand. Third, it underlines the fact that New Zealand often followed a similar path to the US regarding policy and legislation, social movements, and various social developments and that this was also evident with the introduction of female officers into men's prisons. For the 19th and early 20th centuries, most information about female correctional officers (or matrons, as they were previously titled) comes from the reports, articles, and autobiographies of superintendents and former inmates.<sup>1</sup> The history given here mostly details the emergence of female correctional officers in the US, as the majority of research available is based on American jails and prisons.

### Matrons

Females first began work within the correctional system as matrons with the establishment of women's lodgings within men's prisons in the first quarter of the 19th century. In the earliest penal institutions in the US, inmates were not classified, even by sex; male officers were responsible for all inmates – male and female.<sup>2</sup> By the late 18th century, as females began to be separated into different areas within prisons, staffing remained the same. The first woman was employed in a corrections role in 1822. Rachel Perijo was given the first matron position in Baltimore penitentiary, where she taught

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<sup>1</sup> Clarice Feinman, *Women in the Criminal Justice System*, 3rd ed. (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1994), 167.

<sup>2</sup> Nicolette Parisi, "The Female Correctional Officer: Her Progress Toward and Prospects for Equality," *The Prison Journal* 64, no. 1 (1984), 92-93.

industrial, educational, and religious training to female inmates.<sup>3</sup> A wing for females was first established in Auburn prison in 1825, a steward and male inmates brought rations and supplies to the female inmates.<sup>4</sup> Reformers for women in prison had stressed the innate characteristics of pious, pure wives and mothers, which provided them with the strength and capacity needed to deal with ‘fallen’ women – only mothers could teach daughters true womanhood. In 1835, a matron was hired to fulfil the role. By 1845, many state legislatures had created positions, particularly in the eastern US, in which women were appointed to supervise female inmates held in separate quarters to the men.

Little demographic information is known about the women who fulfilled these roles during this time. Their choice to take on such a role, according to Kim et al., would have been influenced by several societal and organisational-level factors including social activism, equal employment opportunity legislation, court ordered prison reform efforts, and economic recession.<sup>5</sup> These women were hired because of their perceived maternal abilities, not as professionals in the field of corrections.<sup>6</sup> Each prison generally had only one matron who lived onsite, commonly in the women’s section itself, and was on duty 24 hours a day, six and a half days per week.<sup>7</sup> The women appeared to have been older and widowed, or sometimes, wives of the prison wardens. The role of these women was to look after female inmates in lieu of male officers.

The main rationale for having female staff was that men contributed to, rather than cured, women’s delinquency. Moreover, it was to protect female inmates from sexual abuse by male officers.<sup>8</sup> At the Indiana state prison at Jeffersonville, for example, a young male inmate revealed that younger female inmates were “subjected to the worst of debasement at the hands of prison officials and guards,” while the older women were “obliged to do the work of all.”<sup>9</sup> In 1868, a legislative investigation into Jeffersonville prison concluded “the guards and other employees had free access to the female

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<sup>3</sup> Estelle B. Freedman, *Their Sisters' Keepers: Women's Prison Reform in America, 1830-1930* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1981), 58.

<sup>4</sup> Parisi, "The Female Correctional Officer," 93.

<sup>5</sup> Ahn-Shik Kim et al., "Female Wardens: Results from a National Survey of State Correctional Executives," *The Prison Journal* 83, no. 4 (2003), 406.

<sup>6</sup> Kim et al., "Female Wardens," 406-07.

<sup>7</sup> Nicole Hahn Rafter, *Encyclopedia of Women and Crime* (Phoenix, Arizona: Oryx Press, 2000), 33.

<sup>8</sup> Freedman, *Their Sisters' Keepers*, 59.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

convicts, that the treatment of them has been disgusting, lecherous and brutal.”<sup>10</sup> Although not all prisons had such issues, women reformers were angered by the blatant abuse witnessed in at Jefferson. Despite the introduction of female matrons to help keep safe and reform female inmates, early matrons had neither the authority nor the task to reform ‘fallen women.’ They were to watch over inmates, but these women, themselves, were supervised by male officers who worked within the women’s prisons. Without the opportunity to work with the women, the matrons were unable to reform them as desired. Male officers were traditionally seen as the ‘heavies,’ and one was normally rostered on each shift to provide support in the event of a violent confrontation. The value of having male officers in women’s prisons was recognised as being related more to their ability to exemplify a ‘good man’ to female inmates, than providing back up in dangerous situations.<sup>11</sup>

### Establishment of Separate Women’s Institutions

The decision to place women in separate facilities in the US was made in 1870 at the National Prison Association Meeting, held in Cincinnati, Ohio.<sup>12</sup> It was agreed that female inmates needed to be separated due to the rampant abuse they were experiencing from both male inmates and correctional staff. However, male officers still oversaw the management of the women’s prisons around the US. One reformer described this male dominance for women as being “arrested by men, given into the hands of men to be searched and cared for, tried by men, sentenced by men, and committed to our various institutions for months and even years, where only men officials had access to them, and where, in sickness or direst need, no womanly help or visitation was expected or allowed.”<sup>13</sup> This argument by female officers and reformers eventually convinced the Department of Corrections that women had both the right and the ability to control their own prisons, in 1900.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>11</sup> Celia Lashlie, *The Journey to Prison: Who Goes and Why* (Auckland, New Zealand: Harper Collins, 2002), 27.

<sup>12</sup> Elaine Gunnison, Frances P Bernat, and Lynne Goodstein, *Women, Crime, and Justice: Balancing the Scales* (West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2016), n.p.

<sup>13</sup> Freedman, *Their Sisters' Keepers*, 61.

The establishment of separate institutions also led to the expansion of employment opportunities for women, as boards of corrections and state legislatures gave female administrators more autonomy.<sup>14</sup> In 1871, Enoch C. Wines, secretary of the New York Prison Association, recommended Principle XXXVII, which recognised the contributions of women in the field of corrections and was ultimately adopted by the National Prison Congress: "the agency of women may be employed with excellent effect."<sup>15</sup> Aforementioned arguments by prison reformers regarding the potential role women could play in rehabilitation of female inmates, together with other evidence presented, had convinced legislators to pass laws establishing a separate women's prison system, and in doing so, created a permanent place for women professionals in corrections.<sup>16</sup>

With the establishment of women's prisons came a change in the type of women assuming the role of correctional officers. Whilst the hours and living arrangements for the women who fulfilled these roles were similar to the matrons, their demographics differed. The women who worked in the new prisons were typically single, working-class women, who were often required to resign their posts if they married. The shifts were 12-hours long, with female officers living and eating in inmate cottages, in accordance with the family model advocated by prison reformers and adopted from the juvenile system. The cottage plan included prisons located in rural areas with a number of smallish, homelike residences.<sup>17</sup>

The cottage plan appealed to reformers as it was congruent with what they conceived of as women's nature: women were too passive to attempt escapes, impressionable, and therefore in need of gentle discipline. Moreover, the cottage plan offered excellent opportunities for domestic training, which the reformers came to identify as crucial to the rehabilitation of criminal women.<sup>18</sup> Not all criminals were peacefully accepted into the women's prisons however, particularly black women, as they were not believed to be capable of reform.

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<sup>14</sup> Rafter, *Encyclopedia of Women and Crime*, 33.

<sup>15</sup> Carl Nink, "Women Professionals in Corrections: A Growing Asset," *Management and Training Corporation Institute* 16 (2008), 4.

<sup>16</sup> Kim et al., "Female Wardens," 407.

<sup>17</sup> Nicole Hahn Rafter, "Gender, Prisons, and Prison History," *Social Science History* 9, no. 3 (1985), 236.

<sup>18</sup> Rafter, "Gender, Prisons, and Prison History," 237.

Well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the majority of correctional positions in all women's correctional facilities in the US were held by white women. The first black woman hired as a prison matron was in 1919. Black officers, particularly in the southern US, would commonly supervise minority inmates who were segregated from white inmates.<sup>19</sup> Prison reformers were reluctant even to house coloured women in prisons, as the aims of these institutions were to rescue and reform, to "restore fallen women to true womanhood."<sup>20</sup> Black women were simply not considered worthy of their rehabilitative efforts, and were deemed incapable of transforming into women with the status of a 'lady.' This racism was also seen when sentencing criminals – if a white woman committed an extremely serious crime, such as arson or murder, authorities felt compelled to act. However, they tended to seek alternative dispositions for less serious crimes, such as probation. In contrast, authorities had little interest in offering alternatives to black women convicted of less serious crimes.<sup>21</sup>

During the 20th century, the demographic and role of female officers in the US continued to change. Imprisoned in 1919 for a federal offence under the *Espionage Act*, Kate O'Hare wrote of her experiences at the state prison in Jefferson City, Missouri. The prison was for male inmates, with a section for females.<sup>22</sup> A male warden oversaw the chief matron and subordinate matrons. O'Hare wrote that the matrons "were prisoners to almost the same degree we were" and she believed the matrons struggled with the responsibility that was far too great for "their limited intelligence and untrained powers."<sup>23</sup> O'Hare also described the sadness of these women, who had "missed love and wifehood; they had nothing to look back upon or forward to." O'Hare highlighted the stigma attached to a matron's type of work which made the possibilities of finding a life partner very limited.

In 1986, Jean Harries, sentenced to fifteen years to life at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility in New York wrote "There are some very decent human beings who choose this line of work, who do it because they cannot get any other kind of work. As a rule, they are treated with the same degree of

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<sup>19</sup> Rafter, *Encyclopedia of Women and Crime*, 33.

<sup>20</sup> Rafter, "Gender, Prisons, and Prison History," 240.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 241.

<sup>22</sup> Feinman, *Women in the Criminal Justice System*, 166.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 166-167.

respect they give others.”<sup>24</sup> Harries highlighted it was unpleasant duty, but much of the unpleasantness they [the officers] create for themselves. Some of the officers held college degrees and graduate work, and viewed their job as a teaching role – to correct is to teach – and their efforts were, according to Harries, “nothing short of heroic.”<sup>25</sup> In her 1994 book *Women in the Criminal Justice System* Clarice Feinman contended the difference between the two accounts given by Harris and O’Hare indicated the changes in the officers and their problems. Officers in the 1990s were better educated and trained. Some were married and had children, whilst those that were single had more freedom in how they lived.<sup>26</sup>

Despite these advancements in employment, factors such as geography affected the recruitment and retention of female officers. In the US, women’s prisons were often located in rural areas, and women from cities were reluctant to travel long distances to work, or move to a more isolated area.<sup>27</sup> Staff were therefore often recruited from the local community. These jobs were accepted as no other jobs were available and the benefits and salaries were considered reasonable, not because the women had any particular interest in that type of role. Therefore, staff turnover was high as local women left for other jobs as soon as possible.<sup>28</sup> In contrast, women’s jails in the US during the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century were easier to staff and had lower turnover as they were located in the cities, with large numbers of women who resided within a reasonable distance.<sup>29</sup>

Feinman stated in her 1994 book, utilising interviews since the 1970s with women working in women’s or men’s prisons or jails in many cities across the US, that most women applied to be prison officers for job security, good salaries, pensions, health benefits (including maternity), vacations, and sick leave. These were important to women who had no skills, and only a high school diploma or its equivalent and to minority women.<sup>30</sup> A study in the US conducted by The Centre for Women’s Policy

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Feinman, *Women in the Criminal Justice System*, 166-67.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 167.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 169.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 168.

<sup>29</sup> Jails are for individual awaiting trial or being held for minor crimes; prison is for convicted criminals of serious crimes.

<sup>30</sup> Feinman, *Women in the Criminal Justice System*, 169.

Studies and cited by Feinman in 1994, found that women who sought employment in the US did so because of career opportunities and salaries, along with their interest in the work.<sup>31</sup>

By 1966, only ten women's institutions were managed by females.<sup>32</sup> To fix this situation, an alternative was offered: replace the demeaning influences of men with the uplifting force of women. A woman's superior knowledge of domestic economy would reduce state expenses, whilst staff and management of the same sex offered sympathetic counsel and representation of women's own interests. Despite a lack of women in managerial positions, the number of female correctional officers continued to increase.

Reports from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in the US indicated an increase in female officers from 9.2 percent to 12.7 percent from 1973 to 1979.<sup>33</sup> However, female correctional officers comprised less than one-fifth of all female correctional employees in 1979, whilst almost one half of male correctional staff were correctional officers. Females disproportionately held clerical positions – over 40 percent of females, but less than 2 percent of males.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, although the number of females employed was increasing within corrections, it was mainly within traditionally female dominated roles.

By 1990, some managers of women's institutions in the US boasted the attainment of female control. Massachusetts prison commission secretary, Warren Spalding commented "every officer, from the head down to the lowest matron, is a female, and no man goes into the institution for any official business whatever."<sup>35</sup> The acceptance of female authority seemed to be now based as much on a woman's capability to control inmates as on their feminine skills in reforming them.

Although separate women's prisons were established, they were initially based on the same model as men's prisons, with female inmates treated the same as male inmates by officers. Studies have shown however, this is bad policy. According to Crouch (1982), within the Texas Department of Corrections

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Parisi, "The Female Correctional Officer," 93.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Freedman, *Their Sisters' Keepers*, 71-72.



a 'macho' culture defines appropriate behaviour for both the keepers and the kept. The formal training of the officers stressed the untrustworthiness, conniving, and even dangerous nature of the criminals, who thus needed constant supervision. Informal advice urged officers to remain distant and relate to inmates in a general manner.<sup>36</sup> In women's prisons however, a new female officer is presented a very different picture of appropriate inmate behaviour, both physically and socially.

The women's prisons, although made of the same concrete and steel and designed to ensure security, have focused efforts on reducing the strictness of the environment and maximising the 'softness' deemed appropriate for women. Privacy is imperative, and design features included decorated grill work instead of straight bars, and bright colours.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, females could study flower arranging, home improvement, and cosmetology; primary work assignments for female inmates were operating a sewing machine in a garment factory.

Whilst clear rules were still regularly enforced, the general assumption was that female inmates were less able than males to pose a serious threat to correctional officers. Therefore, an important yet informal measure emerged for judging the quality of female officers: how well she could 'get along' and maintain smooth relations with inmates and other officers. These qualitative differences between the men's and women's prisons were certainly capable, according to Crouch, of producing quite different ideas among officers about how inmates should be handled and responded to appropriately.<sup>38</sup>

### Female Officers in Men's Prisons

Internationally, female officers began to be employed in men's prisons in the 1970s although as previously mentioned, most research on this is based in the US. According to Parisi (1984), the first state in the US to introduce female officers in men's facilities was California in the early 1970s. Since then, integration of both male and female officers has been continuing swiftly.<sup>39</sup> The treatment of female officers in New Zealand in the first phase of their employment within men's prisons did not

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<sup>36</sup> Ben M. Crouch and Geoffrey P. Alpert, "Sex and Occupational Socialization among Prison Guards: A Longitudinal Study," *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 9, no. 2 (1982), 171.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 172.

<sup>39</sup> Parisi, "The Female Correctional Officer," 95.

reflect the treatment of their female counterparts in other Western countries. Unlike in New Zealand, several cases of discrimination were brought before the court in the US. The major impetus for hiring female correctional officers in men's prisons in the US since the 1970s was legal pressure, particularly Title VII of the *Civil Rights Act 1964*.<sup>40</sup> The original Act prohibited employment discrimination, but only in the private sector, whereas "Title VII prohibits all employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex and national origin." Other factors reinforced the changes in legislation, such as the growing realization among women of the greater job availability (more men's prisons than women's prisons), higher pay in men's prisons, and the promotional opportunities available with the wider range of experience in the corrections system.<sup>41</sup>

In other Western countries, little is known about the beginning of employment for female officers in men's prisons. In England, seven years after the *Sex Discrimination Act 1975*, Her Majesty's Prison Service introduced the cross-posting policy, whereby prison officers were able to work in prisons with inmates of the opposite sex.<sup>42</sup> No specific legislation concerning female correctional officers has been written in New Zealand. Legislation around equal employment opportunities emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, however the first female correctional officer to be employed in a men's prison was not until 1985.

According to international literature, there are several reasons why women were not hired within men's prisons in Western countries prior to the 1970s. These included concerns around their safety and security, the possibility of violations of inmate privacy, and their effect on the behaviour of male inmates. Moreover, women were viewed as unsuited or less qualified for employment in corrections, based on deep-set beliefs around natural differences between men and women.<sup>43</sup> It was also believed that a woman's perceived lack of strength left them vulnerable to assault, and unable to provide

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<sup>40</sup> Joanne Belknap, "Women in Conflict: An Analysis of Women Correctional Officers," *Women & Criminal Justice* 2, no. 2 (1991), 90.

<sup>41</sup> Mary Ann Farkas and Kathryn Rand, "Female Correctional Officers and Prisoner Privacy," *Marquette Law Review* 80 (1996), 995.

<sup>42</sup> Elizabeth Boyd and Tim Grant, "Is Gender a Factor in Perceived Prison Officer Competence? Male Prisoners' Perceptions in an English Dispersal Prison," *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health* 15, no. 1 (2005), 67.

<sup>43</sup> Farkas, Mary Ann. "Inmate Supervisory Style: Does Gender Make A Difference?" *Women and Criminal Justice* 10, no. 4 (2000), 26.

backup for their male co-workers. Although Title VII of the *Civil Rights Act 1964* prohibited discrimination against employment opportunities, it did not explicitly require identical treatment of men and women once given the job. Having to hire female officers created new burdens, not only for the male officers, but for prison administrations. By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, literature shows court decisions regarding inmate privacy and cross-gender searches varied widely, making it difficult for prison management to accurately consider any potential liability and act accordingly. Subsequently, employment opportunities for female correctional officers were limited by the court's failure to uniformly analyse inmate privacy claims.<sup>44</sup>

Several issues arose in the US court system surrounding the emergence of female officers within corrections, which were not seen in New Zealand. In 1977 for example, Diane Rawlinson who was soon to graduate with a degree in psychology from the University of Alabama, had applied for a job with the Alabama Board of Corrections. She was rejected however, as she weighed five pounds less than the minimum statutory requirement for this employment position.<sup>45</sup> Ms Rawlinson challenged this requirement through a class-action suit, as well as the regulation which barred women from 'continual close proximity,' as discriminatory. The court ruled the height and weight qualifications did violate Title VII, as the Alabama Board of Corrections failed to show how height or weight were job related, or how women could not serve successfully in men's prisons.

The plaintiff showed the statutory requirements would exclude over 41 percent of the nation's female population whilst excluding less than one percent of the male population.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, the state's no contact rule was also abolished. However, the judge upheld the exclusion of female officers from Alabama's maximum-security prison, as they were more susceptible to assault, especially sexual assault.<sup>47</sup> This decision rested entirely upon the uniquely dangerous conditions within Alabama's prisons and the fact that a large proportion of the inmates were sex offenders. Therefore, Rawlinson

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<sup>44</sup> Farkas and Rand, "Female Correctional Officers and Prisoner Privacy," 1029.

<sup>45</sup> The height and weight restrictions were the same for both male and female officers, but were based on male officers as, to this point, females were not employed. Restrictions on height and weight were not exclusive to the area of corrections, and were found within other government departments, such as the police.

<sup>46</sup> Farkas and Rand, "Female Correctional Officers and Prisoner Privacy," 997-98.

<sup>47</sup> Geoffrey P. Alpert, "The Needs of the Judiciary and Misapplications of Social Research: The Case of Female Guards in Men's Prisons," *Criminology* 22, no. 3 (1984), 446-47.

was denied employment not based on her height and weight, but because of the uniquely dangerous conditions of the prison.

In states where women were hired quickly after the change in legislation, there was little assistance or guidance for administrators on deciding how to legally and efficiently use female staff.<sup>48</sup> Prison administrations were subject to immediate reactions from various disgruntled groups regarding policy decisions for employing women: male officers argued against the non-contact policy for female officers as they discriminated against men, and female officers themselves complained about the limitations of assignment possibilities, as well as complaints claiming illegal gender discrimination. Therefore, many jurisdictions restricted the tasks that female officers could perform in all male facilities, such as being excluded from male inmate housing. A US survey in 1982 found only two of the 55 responding correctional institutions (12 jurisdictions did not respond) did not employ female officers in their men's prisons. On average, 8.4 percent of officers in men's prisons were female.<sup>49</sup> Female officers were not given a chance to show their ability until studies began to examine factors such as their work ethic and job satisfaction.

Perhaps the most famous study of American female correctional officers in a men's prison was Lynn Zimmer's *Women Guarding Men* in 1986. Before 1972, Virginia and Idaho were the only two states that hired female correctional officers, as it was an extremely non-traditional occupation for women.<sup>50</sup> Male officers and administrators of men's prisons were strongly opposed to the employment of female officers and the perceived consequences of their presence in prisons. The male officers feared for their own safety and the security of prisoners, but some arguably also resented the end of their all-male world, disturbance of the solidarity they have enjoyed with co-workers, and destruction of the concept that masculinity is a necessary requirement for the job. Moreover, most men (consciously or unconsciously) behave differently in the presence of women, meaning the employment of female

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<sup>48</sup> Lynn Zimmer, *Women Guarding Men* (Chicago, US: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 160-61.

<sup>49</sup> Parisi, "The Female Correctional Officer," 95.

<sup>50</sup> Zimmer, *Women Guarding Men*, 50.

officers required them to alter their behaviour on the job.<sup>51</sup> The most receptive were the male inmates, however, there was still strong opposition from some in this group.

It is important to note that not all female officers desired to work with male inmates. For example, in 1985, Zimmer stated that few female officers in the US expressed an explicit preference for working with male inmates, but accepted working in a men's prison because they wanted the job of a correctional officer. Some hoped to transfer to a women's prison as soon as possible, whilst others who had transferred from a women's prison appreciated the additional job opportunities available in a men's prison. Zimmer said that only a few women claimed to work at a men's prisons because they enjoyed working there; the major motivations for remaining at a men's prison were increased opportunity for advancement or to obtain preferred shifts and posts.<sup>52</sup>

The preference of inmates for either male or female officers has been studied, such as the 1979 US study by Holland et al., which examined preferences of male and female inmates and civilly committed addicts. The results showed "a tendency for inmates to prefer institutional personnel of the opposite sex or at least not to express predominantly negative attitudes toward such employees."<sup>53</sup> Of the four groups examined, male inmates were most likely to prefer prison functions be performed by officers of the same sex. Female inmates preferred female officers to pat-down searches, escort duties, and visiting room searches for inmates, but preferred male officers for managing a disturbance and for the chaplain role. This result highlights that female inmates, to some extent, also perceived women as inferior to male officers in regard to the argument around safety, strength, and gender.

Although both male and female inmates had no preferences for over half of prison jobs, inmates still viewed certain functions as appropriate for only female or male officers. Holland et al. stated, "For a few of the roles under consideration, the selection of male staff members (e.g., grounds maintenance, chaplain), as well as certain preferences for females (e.g., nurse), appears to be based on common beliefs regarding sex roles and the relative competencies of men and women, despite instructions to

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 155.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>53</sup> Terrill R Holland et al., "Preferences of Prison Inmates for Male Versus Female Institutional Personnel," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 64, no. 5 (1979), 566.

the subjects to disregard this issue when responding to items.”<sup>54</sup> Arguably, this highlights the strength of social norms and stereotypes within society. Most sex related preferences related to the privacy of inmates. A limitation of the study was many male inmates have had comparatively little exposure to female staff members and could become increasingly receptive to these employees if given the opportunity to become acquainted with their job performance.<sup>55</sup>

Male inmates argued that having a female officer see them naked or watch them use the toilet was a breach of their privacy, an argument which female inmates had been upholding regarding male officers. In *Weatherall v Canada* (1993), an argument was presented by the Court in the US to explain why the difference in treatment of male and female inmates did not constitute discrimination on the grounds of gender. The Court argued:

Given the historical, biological and sociological differences between men and women, equality does not demand that practices which are forbidden where male officers guard female inmates must also be banned where female officers guard male inmates. The reality of the relationship between the sexes is such that the historical trend of violence perpetrated by men against women is not matched by a comparable trend pursuant to which men are the victims and women the aggressors. Biologically, a frisk search or surveillance of a man's chest area conducted by a female officer does not implicate the same concerns as the same practice by a male officer in relation to a female inmate. Moreover, women generally occupy a disadvantaged position in society in relation to men. Viewed in this light, it becomes clear that the effect of cross-gender searching is different and more threatening for women than men. The difference in treatment to which the appellant objects thus may not be discrimination at all.<sup>56</sup>

Huscroft, when referencing this case in his 1997 work published in New Zealand, asked why the women's disadvantaged position in society justified differences in treatment for male inmates, a group

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<sup>54</sup> Holland et al., "Preferences of Prison Inmates for Male Versus Female Institutional Personnel," 566.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 567.

<sup>56</sup> Grant Huscroft, "Discrimination, Dignity, and the Limits of Equality," *Otago Law Review* 9 (1997), 706-07.

also in a disadvantaged position when compared to free people in society. Huscroft argued the Court was more concerned with equal employment opportunities for female correctional officers than with the embarrassment felt by male inmates during cross-sex searching and surveillance. The Court downplayed the inmate's complaint, stating few complaints had been made about female officers, and officers were trained to act with 'due regard' for the dignity of the inmate. Moreover, the occasions in which a male inmate would be viewed naked were, according to the Court, rare and fleeting.<sup>57</sup>

A status report on female correctional officers in the US by Peter Horne in 1985 outlined conclusions drawn from 1979 research which he believed were still valid. The major features for females in corrections were that women were underrepresented in comparison to their participation in the employed civilian labour force; female staff tended to be concentrated in clerical and support staff positions; and the females who did work in direct contact with clients worked with female and juvenile offenders.<sup>58</sup> In 1979, approximately 58 percent of all women employed in corrections were providing supportive services, leaving 42 percent working in occupations that involved direct contact with inmates. By 1981, only four states did not use women correctional officers in all men prisons, and by 1988, women made up 15 percent of the correctional officers within the prison systems in the US.<sup>59</sup>

The number of female officers in men's prisons varied from state to state, but 10,000 female officers were recorded in total. Females were usually assigned areas considered 'safe' and allowed little to no contact with male inmates, such as observing visits, working in the wall tower, working in the communications control room, and searching female visitors and employees for contraband.<sup>60</sup> All the data concerning women in corrections, Horne believed, pointed to the fact that females are

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 707.

<sup>58</sup> Peter Horne, "Female Correction Officer-A Status Report," *Federal Probation* 49 (1985), 47.

<sup>59</sup> Joseph R Carlson, George Thomas, and Richard H Anson, "Cross-Gender Perceptions of Corrections Officers in Gender-Segregated Prisons," *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation* 39, no. 1 (2004), 85.

<sup>60</sup> Horne, "Female Correction Officer-A Status Report," 48.

‘underutilized.’ By 1992, women made up 11.5 percent of federal correctional officers in the US, with the majority assigned to work in men's prisons.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Dana M Britton, "Perceptions of the Work Environment Among Correctional Officers: Do Race and Sex Matter?" *Criminology* 35, no. 1 (1997), 98.



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## Female Correctional Officers in New Zealand

Prior to the mid-20th century little information is available for the employment of female correctional officers in New Zealand. Information obtained through the Official Information Act, as well as information from research at the New Zealand Archives in Wellington makes up most of the material for this chapter, as well as an analysis of the few secondary articles available. Information on the number of female officers employed based on public service lists from 1980 – 87, is also examined.

The first female attendant was appointed to look after female inmates at Auckland Gaol in 1851. In 1911, the first female-only prison, known as a reformatory, was opened at Shelley Bay, in Wellington.<sup>1</sup> Regarding female employees, a folder containing a selection of historic applications for employment within the Department of Corrections is currently held at the New Zealand Archives in Wellington. These record the employment of females within the Department of Corrections, and show women in New Zealand applying for corrections roles at women's prisons, such as Arohata Borstal. A blank application form from this period was also amongst the records and is attached as Appendix 1. This document shows the types of questions asked and details noted within the interview process for a corrections position. Such details included the appearance of the interviewee, their height and weight, their maturity, and their conjugal status, including the sex of their children.

The earliest record is from late November 1953, for a Miss Glanfield, a prison officer in England, seeking to apply for a prison officer role in New Zealand, where she hoped to settle. With the record is the response from H. V. Haywood, Superintendent of Auckland prison, requesting her to phone him to discuss the matter further. Multiple records mention an open position for assistant matron at Arohata Borstal – an application from a Miss Coates, and a Mrs Ollson. There was a copy of the response letter to Miss Coates' application in which she originally applied for a position within the probation service, but as there were no vacancies in this area at the time, she was directed to the

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Corrections. Information Received through the Official Information Act. April 2019.

assistant matron position and prompted to make contact for further information. Her application form was also documented. Mrs Ollson applied for the assistant matron position but was unsuccessful. A third record is also documented regarding the assistant matron position, with the initial letter of inquiry and the response letter from June 1954 documented.

The response letter has the salary scale for the assistant matron position, which commenced at £342 p.a. For the applicant in question, Miss Clemett, her “previous nursing experience” was “taken into consideration” and therefore it was possible she would start at a higher step of the salary scale “i.e. at £405 or £438 p.a.” Accommodation was also available, and rations provided at an inclusive cost of £51 p.a.

Mary Josephine Molloy, known as Molly, worked as a prison officer in 1931 from October until December, before being appointed as Assistant Matron at Mount Eden in 1940. Molloy became Head Matron in 1947, before becoming Deputy Superintendent at Mount Eden in c.1953. She eventually retired in 1966.<sup>2</sup> Molloy had been referred to the temporary vacancy at the prison from her previous employer, who she worked for in a Nursing Home. Her previous employer told her not to mention her age; she was 23 at the time, but her previous employer had told the Matron that Molloy was over 30, otherwise, Molloy says, the Matron would not have considered her for the role.

When Molloy started at Mt Eden Women’s prison, she and her fellow staff wore a uniform which was grey nurses’ cloth with a cap, and the matron wore a veil. The uniform was removed altogether, around the time of WWII, Molloy recalled. Uniforms were given for court appearances, but otherwise the staff could wear what they liked. Molloy did not think this was a good idea, as not all women had the same dress sense.<sup>3</sup> At the prison, Molloy and her fellow officers started at 6:30am and worked until 5pm and had the night off. The next morning, she would start at 8am and work until 9:45pm when it was lights out, and had to stay until 5pm the next day. Based on these hours, Molloy and her fellow officers were working the equivalent of a 108.5 hour week. In addition to these duties, the female staff used to escort inmates to the Supreme Court. If an inmate was held late at the Court,

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<sup>2</sup> Mary Josephine Molloy, “Untitled,” Interview by Greg Newbold, June 15, 1983.

<sup>3</sup> Molloy, “Untitled.”

whichever staff member scheduled to have the night off at the prison, could not leave until the inmate and other staff member returned.<sup>4</sup>

Prison management were forced to pay the men overtime, but they did not think have to pay the female staff overtime. In the end however, they offered a £20 allowance per year, which Molloy calculated to be less than 3 threepence an hour. She considered herself worth a lot more than that.<sup>5</sup>

Molloy recalled it was not until she was employed in Dunedin prison at the end of 1965 that the women received equal pay to the male employees. By that time, Molloy was Superintendent and outranked many male officers, but was not getting Superintendent's pay. Aside from the wage, other aspects of the job were satisfactory for Molloy. She ate breakfast with the Matron whilst at work and found the food provided to be very good. She said, "We had to supplement, but it was still cheap living."<sup>6</sup> Molloy also described the living quarters as comfortable, which helped make the role not as bad as other occupations.

Molloy recalled she had no trouble with the female inmates during her time at the prison. The Matron ran a 'tight ship,' and most of the inmates were in the older age group. For many of the inmates, it was not their first time in prison.<sup>7</sup> Not all aspects of the job were positive, however. In an interview with Greg Newbold, Molloy, then aged around 75, discussed the reinstatement of hanging. She recalled one inmate who was condemned whilst Molloy was employed at the prison. After being sentenced to death, she was granted a reprieve and served a life sentence.<sup>8</sup>

Florence Howland was appointed Deputy Superintendent at Arohata Borstal in 1958, before becoming Superintendent shortly after, in May 1959. Howland reported that no officers wore uniforms, as it was important, she felt, that the staff showed inmates how to dress; to set an example in every way. Howland could not get a higher grading as no women were appointed to men's prisons, which

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<sup>4</sup> Molloy, "Untitled."

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

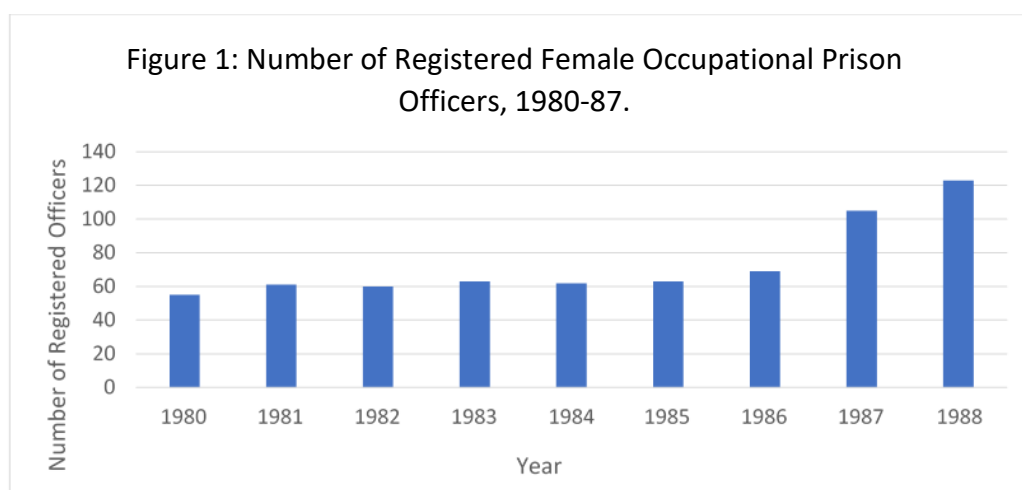
<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

“affected her salary and everything”.<sup>9</sup> Howland found it very difficult when she lived on site as she was constantly on call and had to return at any time.

In the following two decades, the number of female correctional officers increased within women’s prisons throughout New Zealand. By 1980, as outlined in the Public Service Lists from 1980-1988 retrieved from the New Zealand Archives in Wellington, female officers were becoming more commonly employed in men’s prisons, with the number of women holding consistently. The Public Service Lists recorded the name, role, location of work, and salary, amongst other features, of all prison officers in New Zealand. These data were examined, and all female officers’ information was extracted and recorded. The data do not include females who were employed in an instructional role in prisons, such as cooking or sewing, or nurses, but those employed in occupational prison officer roles. From these data, Figure 1 shows there were 55 registered female prison officers in 1980.



Source: List of Persons Employed on the Permanent Staff of the Public Service: 31<sup>st</sup> March 1980 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 1988

This number remained relatively stable until 1987, when a dramatic increase in females within the role saw the registered number rise to 105, before rising again in 1988 to 123 registered female officers. This increase from 1987 highlights the push for equal employment opportunities and the

<sup>9</sup> Megan Hutching and New Zealand Department of Internal Affairs. *Just Women: Women in the Corrections Operations Group of the Department of Justice*. (Wellington, New Zealand: Department of Internal Affairs, 1994), 14.

increase in females within the workforce, particularly male dominated jobs, such as the employment of female officers within men's prisons from mid-1985.

In 1985, Geoffrey Palmer's Criminal Justice Act was introduced, which saw a mass exodus in the number of inmates throughout New Zealand, as the parole board, quite indiscriminately, ordered the release of large numbers of inmates who had served half or more of their sentence.<sup>10</sup> From the introduction of the act in September 1985 and March 1986, more than 1,000 inmates – a third of the entire prison muster at the time – was released early under the terms of the new act. However, this exodus of inmates did little more than shorten the recidivism cycle as prisons soon began to fill again. Within two years, inmate numbers were back to the rate in 1984 and continued a steep and unrelenting ascent. By 1990, there were nearly 4,000 inmates and by 1995, there was 4,553, which was 69 percent more than the decade prior.<sup>11</sup> At first the rise in the male inmate population was paralleled by female inmates, but after 2001, the number of women began to grow faster than that of men. This was possible due to the Sentencing and Parole Acts in 2002, which toughened aspects of sentencing, parole, and recall.<sup>12</sup> The increase in both male and female inmates meant more officers were needed.

From 1980 to 1988, these data also show an increase in the ranking of female correctional officers, as well as the quantity of those gaining a ranking higher than a standard prison officer. This shows the progression of females into higher ranking roles of which were previously not available to male officers. As shown in Figure 2, a female officer was not appointed to the role of superintendent until 1984, when Rosemary Fleur Grenfell became superintendent of Christchurch prison, before transferring to Arohata Borstal from 1985. As more women began working in the prison system from 1986, females began advancing through the ranks, with an increase in females fulfilling the roles of second officer and third officer. However, the number of women in certain roles remained constant, with little fluctuation in the recorded number of first officers and Divisional Leaders, highlighting the

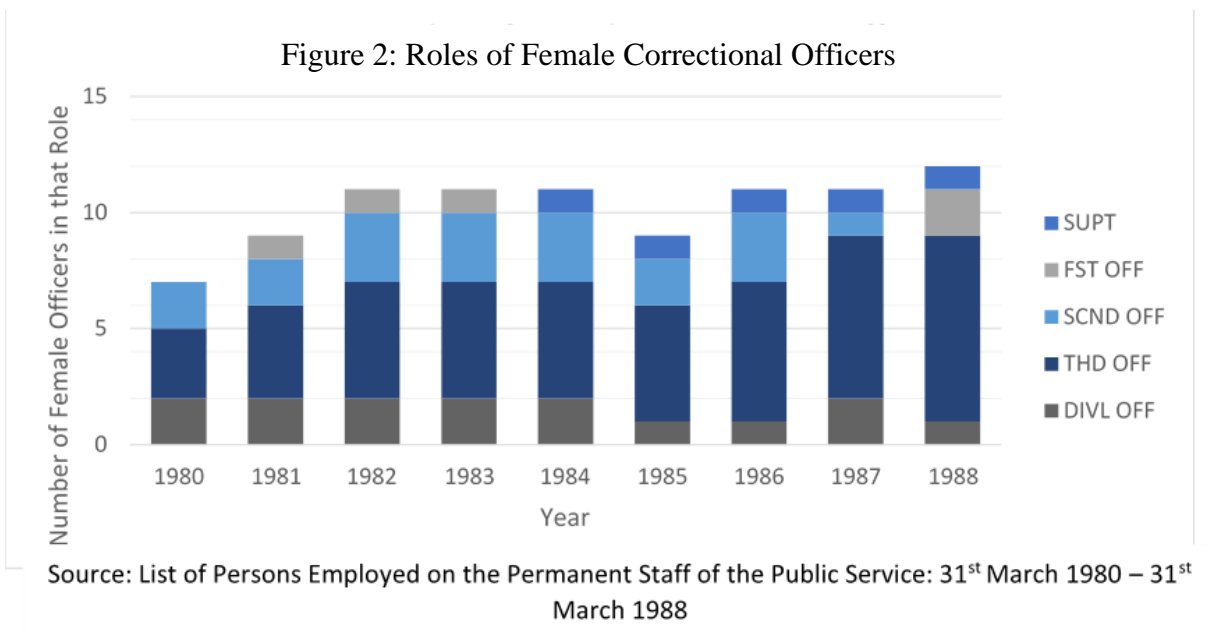
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<sup>10</sup> Greg Newbold, *The Problem of Prisons: Corrections Reform in New Zealand Since 1840* (Wellington, New Zealand: Dunmore Publishing, 2007), 86.

<sup>11</sup> Newbold, *The Problem of Prisons*, 87.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 206.

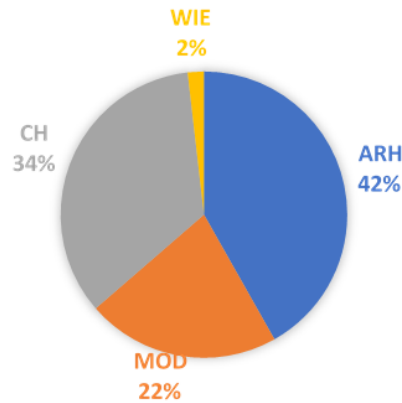
struggle for women to achieve high ranking positions. The first female manager of a men’s prison was appointed in 1991, when Heather Colby was given the role at Tongariro prison.



In 1980, female correctional officers were restricted in their locations for employment, having not yet been fully integrated in the Department of Corrections. Female officers were only employed in women’s prisons and therefore, as shown in the data, were only stationed at four prisons around New Zealand – Arohata Borstal, Christchurch women’s prison, Mount Eden prison, and Waikeria prison.

As shown in Figure 3, the majority (42 percent) of female officers worked at Arohata Borstal, whilst 34 percent worked at Christchurch women’s prison, 22 percent at Mount Eden Prison, and only 2 percent at Waikeria prison. However, as shown in Table 1, female officers began to gain employment in a wider range of prisons, as the integration of female officers into both gender prisons took effect. By 1988, female officers were employed at 16 correctional facilities around New Zealand, including Rolleston prison, Wi Tako prison, Dunedin prison and Manawatu prison.

Figure 3: Registered Locations of Female Correctional Officers, 1980.



Source: List of Persons Employed on the Permanent Staff of the Public Service: 31<sup>st</sup> March 1980 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 1988

Table 1: Location and Number of Registered Female Officers in New Zealand in 1988.

Location	Number of Registered Female Officers
Arohata Borstal	25
Auckland Prison	1
Christchurch Women's Prison	33
Dunedin Prison	2
Manawatu Prison (Linton)	3
Mount Eden Prison	35
Mt Crawford Prison (Wellington)	1
Napier Prison	2
New Plymouth Prison	2
Ohura State Prison	2
Rangipo Prison	1
Rolleston Prison	4
Tongariro	5
Waikeria Prison	2
Wanganui Prison	3
Wi Tako Prison	2

### Employment in Men's Prisons

In 1970, Eve Bourke began work for the Justice Department as matron in a pre-release hostel for male inmates who had been serving long sentences in Auckland. Bourke believed the Hostel to be an excellent concept, which gave the men optimum circumstances for rehabilitating themselves if they wanted to. She remembered on inmate who walked the hall for about twenty minutes after he arrived;

when asked what was wrong, he replied, “I don’t know if I can stay here. I haven’t spoken to a woman for x number of years and we use such filthy language in prison.”<sup>13</sup> Bourke heard of a women’s periodic detention centre being established, and the intention of appointing a man as the first warden, an idea which infuriated Bourke, and she decided to apply herself.<sup>14</sup> Bourke worked long hours at the hostel, usually in the kitchen cooking breakfast by 6am. She was appointed as warden of the centre in late 1974.

The first female correctional officer employed in a men’s prison in New Zealand was Celia Lashlie in 1985, who was hired to work at Wi Tako prison, a minimum-security men’s prison near Wellington.<sup>15</sup> Other countries, such as the US, Australia, and Britain, employed female correctional officers in men’s prisons from the early 1970s. Lashlie was born in Taihape in 1953. She married young at 19 and had two children, before becoming a solo mother. Lashlie completed a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology and Māori, and began work as a probation officer in 1984, before she applied for the correctional officer role at Wi Tako prison.<sup>16</sup>

In her 2002 book, *Who Goes to Prison and Why*, Lashlie detailed the conversation which first raised the idea of her becoming a correctional officer. The conversation, with a male who worked in a support role in Wellington prison, concerned the fact that the previous evening two officers had apparently decided not to place an inmate, who had been convicted of sex crimes against children, into the segregation wing upon his arrival, instead placing him into general population. The officers had been overheard talking about ‘adding their own brand of justice’ to the sentence given down by the judge. Given his status as a child sex offender, the officers knew the inmate was at an increased risk of getting assaulted by the other inmates. The following morning the inmate was admitted to

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>14</sup> Hutching and New Zealand Department of Internal Affairs, “Just Women,” 32.

<sup>15</sup> Celia Lashlie, *The Journey to Prison: Who Goes and Why*, (Auckland, New Zealand: Harper Collins, 2002), 28.

<sup>16</sup> Lashlie, *The Journey to Prison*, 28.



hospital with serious injuries. The man Lashlie had discussed the events with believed such occurrences would be less likely if female officers were employed in men's prisons.<sup>17</sup>

At first, Lashlie thought the idea of working in a men's prison seemed completely ludicrous. Her concerns were not based on working with inmates – her previous job as a probation officer meant she had met enough inmates to dispel any fear – but on the likely responses from the male officers. Due to this, Lashlie initially dismissed the idea of applying for the job; however, as her concerns around the treatment of inmates and the inmates' attitudes towards women and violence continued, the idea arose again. Additionally, the shift work involved in a correctional job, as well as the use of prison housing, made the job appeal to Lashlie financially.<sup>18</sup>

Lashlie recalled seeing her photo on the front page of the local paper in 1985 as the media showed interest in her new job. She believed the Department of Corrections' decision to accept her application for employment was not one based on her excellent communication skills, but a pragmatic choice – Lashlie was 1.78 metres tall, could handle herself in testing situations, and had previous experience as a probation officer so was confident interacting with inmates. Moreover, pressure was building for a female officer to be placed in a men's prison, due to the implementation of equal employment opportunity policies.<sup>19</sup>

Lashlie believed New Zealand was more liberal in terms of the restrictions placed on duties, despite being preceded in employing female officers in men's prisons by Britain, the US, and Australia. As Lashlie wrote, the only duties female officers were not able to do was to search inmates. In all other respects, they were considered the same as their male counterparts. The majority of male officers Lashlie worked with were easy-going, and even enjoyed having some female company on the shift. Some officers had voiced their disapproval of the idea, and a few threatened to resign. Certain officers did leave Wi Tako prison within the first few years of female officers being employed, but whether this was influenced by the arrival of female officers is unknown.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 26-27.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 27-28.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 28.

Lashlie recalled opposition from some of the wives of male officers, who were concerned that she, and other female officers in the future, would not be able to physically back up their husbands in a conflict. They also demanded that Lashlie not be rostered on the night shift with their husbands, although Lashlie stated, “it soon became clear it wasn’t a safety issue, but rather a ‘temptation’ issue.”<sup>20</sup> Lashlie remained at Wi Tako prison for nearly three years, before being promoted to a Third Officer position at Ohura prison in the King Country, where she stayed for a further 18 months.

In 1995, Lashlie was appointed manager of Christchurch women’s prison, where she quickly learned that officers have to think through the ramifications of their decisions and actions much more than they do with men. However, this balanced out as female inmates let themselves be subjected to petty rules that males would have rioted over. Lashlie always used the following analogy when describing the difference she experienced between male and female inmates:

If I was required to take a work party of eight male inmates out to dig a hole in a paddock, I would tell them that’s what we were doing and they would dutifully follow me out to the paddock, shovels in hand, and begin digging. They wouldn’t need to know what the hole was for nor would they care about the location that had been chosen for the hole. As long as they were allowed to stop every hour for a smoke, they got a cup of tea at smoko time and lunch appeared about the time they started to feel hungry, they would be fine and happily keep digging. Eventually someone might ask: ‘What are we doing this for, Boss?’ and as long as the answer was not too far-fetched, the digging would continue until they were told the hole was deep enough or the end of the workday arrived. Now let’s try the same exercise with a work party of eight female inmates.

Before the women even picked up the shovels, they would want to know where the hole was going to be dug; what the hole was for; how deep it was to be; who was bringing morning tea; what time they would be stopping for lunch; had anyone thought that the hole would be better in a different place (they have just the place in mind)? Bearing in mind that there hasn’t yet

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 30.

been any movement towards the prison gates by the work party, there would then be a discussion about the fact that the shovels were not sharp enough to do the job and that the handles on the shovels were not long enough ... or were too long.<sup>21</sup>

According to Lashlie, the prison system of old was one where you put your soul in a box at the door and you went to work. You came out after a shift that may have included hangings or beatings – all the stuff that was involved when you detain people who do not want to be detained – and you picked up your soul again and carried it home. Once in a managerial position in 1996, Lashlie stated she was only interested in staff who held on to their souls at work, and that whilst progress was being made at that time, the organization needed to build a structure which allowed for that type of staff. Despite advancements around gender and equality, she still believed the organisation was “not as aware as it ought to be of what it’s like to be a person outside the white male mould.”<sup>22</sup> By the time Lashlie resigned from Christchurch women’s prison, she was confident the biggest security risk to female officers was from the male officers; their defensiveness in the face of change was more about “preserving a male club that awarded its members status for their powers of physical intimidation rather than the professionalism with which they managed inmates.”<sup>23</sup>

Dorreen MacKenzie began work as a correctional officer at Wanganui men’s prison in 1987, having previously worked at Arohata Borstal. In a *Sunday Star Times* article, Dorreen described her shock, when she became one of the first three female officers out of a staff of 100 at Wanganui prison. She was shocked at how the men’s prisons were basically run as “military-based regimes,” noting it was “all striped, braid and precision timing.”<sup>24</sup> By 1998, Dorreen was the warden at Rimutaka prison in Wellington; however, people still looked over her shoulder for the man when she was introduced in this role.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 96-97.

<sup>22</sup> *The Press*, 19 July 1996.

<sup>23</sup> *The Press*, 30 June 1999.

<sup>24</sup> *Sunday Star Times*, 28 June 1998.

<sup>25</sup> *Sunday Star Times*, 7 June 1998.

By 1988 female officers were employed in all men's prisons except Auckland's maximum-security prison in Paremoremo. The officers there did not wish to work with women and their refusal had gone unchallenged. Members of the union for Auckland prison were fearful female officers would need to be 'babysat' by male officers when dealing with dangerous criminals. However, the 1988 State Sector Act created a legal requirement for public service employers to develop and report annually on their equal employment program, crushing the barriers erected by administration. In order to dismantle the residual opposition to female employees in prisons, which was still present despite the change in legislation, Celia Lashlie, in her role as EEO coordinator, ran seven seminars in late 1990 in an attempt to gain the support of the male officers who resisted the integration, with each seminar attended by 30 prisons staff (who were ordered to attend).<sup>26</sup>

Although ten percent of the 200 officers at Auckland prison remained strongly opposed, three female officers – Pam Osment, Claude Dennis, and Marina Rae - began work at Auckland maximum security prison in March 1991. A 2019 article by *North & South* contained an in-depth interview with Pasimaca Osment, who spent three decades working with some of New Zealand's most dangerous inmates, including within Auckland prison's high-risk and psychiatric units. She is known for being both mentally and physically tough, a reputation she has built not on fear but respect. The Department of Justice Annual Report in 1991 highlighted the "development of equal employment opportunities in the prison service was significantly enhanced when female prison officers commenced duties for the first time in the maximum security division of Auckland prison."<sup>27</sup>

A 1990 newspaper article published in *Dominion Sunday* which discussed the commencement of female employment outlined there were "suggestions from male staff that they [female officers] run the risk of being raped by inmates."<sup>28</sup> Moreover, Public Service Association Paremoremo subgroup chairman John Poole stated the nature of the prison was not appropriate for female officers; a male officer could get into a fight and be beaten up, but if a female officer gets into a fight, she could

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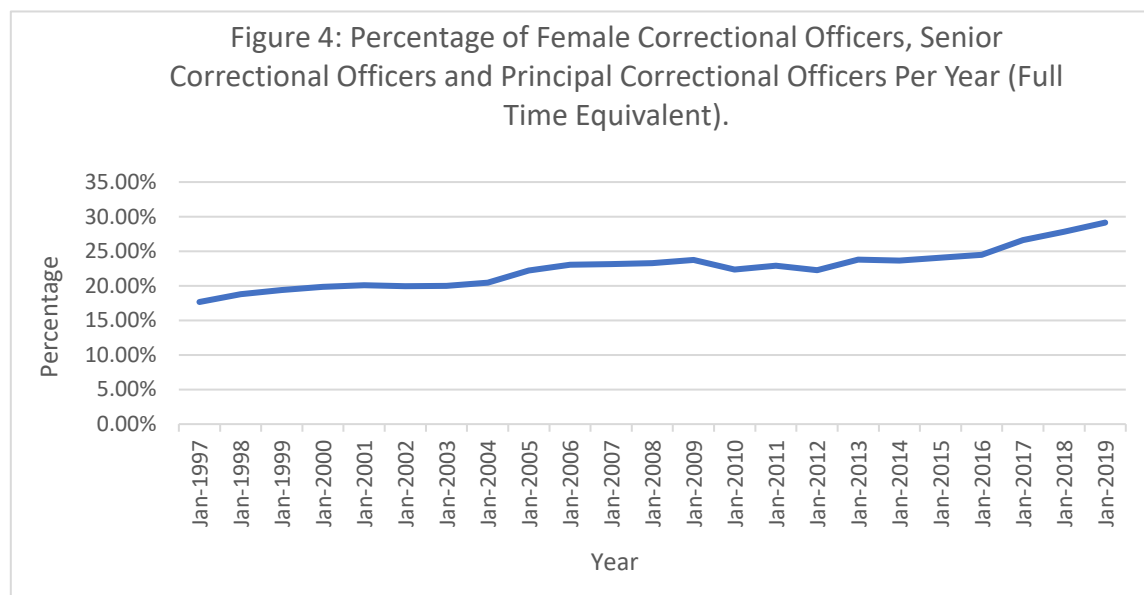
<sup>26</sup> Lashlie, *The Journey to Prison*, 39.

<sup>27</sup> Department of Justice, "Report of the Department of Justice: Year Ended 30<sup>th</sup> June 1991," *AJHR*, 1991-93, E-5, 69.

<sup>28</sup> *Dominion Sunday*, 5 August 1990, 3.

expect to be sexually molested as well.<sup>29</sup> The women interested in taking up work at Auckland prison stated they were well aware of the risk of being assaulted or raped, and declared “we take that responsibility, we realise we are vulnerable in that regard.”<sup>30</sup> Although not common in New Zealand, the women were aware that the risk of being assaulted, and especially raped, was higher for women than their male counterparts.

By the end of 2003, 35 percent of the 4,440 staff working for the Department of Corrections were female, 500 female staff were employed over 18 prisons.<sup>31</sup> Three men’s prisons and one women’s prison were managed by women. Information received under the *Official Information Act* (as seen in Figure 4) shows the continuing increase in female officers gaining employment within corrections into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>32</sup> From 1997 to 2019, the percentage of female officers employed by the Department of Corrections increased 11.49 percent.<sup>33</sup> Research surrounding gender and job turnover is equivocal but increasingly suggests women’s rates are higher.<sup>34</sup>



<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Greg Newbold, "Women Officers Working in Men's Prisons," *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand/Te Puna Whakaaro*, no. 25 (2005), 7.

<sup>32</sup> Department of Corrections, "Snapshot Showing the Number of Female and Male Corrections Officers, Senior Corrections and Principal Corrections Officers Per Year (Full Time Equivalent)." Received through the Official Information Act, April 2019.

<sup>33</sup> Department of Corrections, "Snapshot Showing the Number of Female and Male Corrections Officers, Senior Corrections and Principal Corrections Officers Per Year (Full Time Equivalent)."

<sup>34</sup> Susan Ehrlich Martin and Nancy C Jurik, *Doing Justice, Doing Gender: Women in Legal and Criminal Justice Occupations* (California, US: Sage, 2007), 211.

An increasing presence of female officers within men's prisons in the US is also seen. The Federal Bureau of Prisons (FBP) and 45 state correctional departments reported 22,105 female correctional officers worked in men's prisons, with six states reporting over 1,000 female officers in men's prisons in 1992. Only one state, Indiana, had more men working in women's facilities, with 1160 men compared to 625 women in men's facilities. These numbers, according to Feinman (1994) provide ample proof that women's employment opportunities have improved significantly since the 1970s.<sup>35</sup> By 2000, 24.2 percent of correctional officers in jails were women, 18 percent of state correctional officers, and 11 percent of federal correctional officers.<sup>36</sup> These data show the improvement for females in gaining employment in men's prisons from their introduction in the 1970s. This is important in the context of New Zealand as New Zealand often followed a similar path to the US in terms of policy and legislation.

### Legislation

Several pieces of legislation have allowed for the increase in women within certain areas of employment. For corrections specifically, in 1985 the Department of Justice issued *The Working Party for the Integration of the New Zealand Prison Service*, a report of the necessary changes needed for the full integration of the New Zealand prison service to be completed.<sup>37</sup> This plan was requested by the Minister of Justice following the annual review of policy in late 1984. It was clear, the report stated, that "women's opportunities for employment in the Prison Service were severely limited and certainly not equal to their male counterparts."<sup>38</sup> Only a small number of women could be employed in the service at any one time; there were only limited numbers for senior positions with the consequent lack of opportunity for career advancement; and women were only able to be employed in three locations: Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch. However, due to issues witnessed with the integration of prison staff overseas (integration was shown to be a sensitive industrial relations issue

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<sup>35</sup> Clarice Feinman, *Women in the Criminal Justice System*, 3rd ed. (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1994), 175.

<sup>36</sup> Mary Ann Farkas, "Inmate Supervisory Style: Does Gender Make A Difference?" *Women and Criminal Justice* 10, no. 4 (2000), 26.

<sup>37</sup> Rae Bell and Department of Justice New Zealand. *Working Party for the Integration of the New Zealand Prison Service*. (Wellington, New Zealand: Department of Justice, 1985).

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

with implications for both male and female staff), a working party comprising departmental and union representation was established by the Secretary for Justice in January 1985 to plan the commencement of integration that same year. A representative of the State Services Commission joined the working party in March.<sup>39</sup>

As mentioned, the Working Party's proposal noted several changes which were recommended prior to the integration of the Prison Service staff, such as the medical standards used when an officer applied for employment. For example, whilst section 16 of the Human Rights Commission Act permitted differing requirements of height and weight in respect of persons of each sex who are officers of penal institutions, the Working Party recommended the deletion of the current height standard for male officers, rather than the introduction of a separate standard for female officers; a height minimum was considered arbitrary and unrelated to an individual's ability to perform their duties.<sup>40</sup> Subject to this and other changes outlined by the Working Party, it was recommended that the same medical entry standards apply to both male and female officers.

Another topic which arose within the Working Party's proposal was uniforms, both for female staff in men's prisons and female staff in women's prisons. Determination 528 of the Prisons Group provided a uniform for male officers and a clothing allowance payment for female officers.<sup>41</sup> The issue of uniforms had been raised in previous years, however, apart from the adoption of an unofficial uniform for female staff for court duties, female officers have "continued to be paid an allowance in lieu of a uniform."<sup>42</sup> A submission was sent to the Working Party by staff at the Arohata Women's Youth Institution, who believed they should be exempt from such a requirement as it is a minimum security prison, and met the criteria of the ideal prison population size as identified in the 1981 Penal Policy Review, "the need to prevent uniformity, regimentation and depersonalization of inmates."<sup>43</sup> Despite their submission it was determined that all staff, including the staff of Arohata, were to wear a uniform. Many comments were made about the poor quality and unserviceability of the present prison

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 2.

service uniform. The validity of these concerns was recognised, and an urgent review was undertaken on both male and female uniforms.

From the commencement of officer integration, as seen with women in both the NZP and the defence force, female officers were restricted in their role, mainly regarding the area of inmate's privacy. For example, initially they were only introduced into the youth prisons and minimum-security prisons. This restriction was raised in the Working Party report as if integration was restricted it was recognised that appropriately qualified women could be promoted to ranking positions in prisons where no basic grade female officers were employed. The commencement of integration with no restrictions would prevent such an occurrence, as that was considered undesirable both in terms of opportunities for suggesting preferential treatment for women, and also absence of gender support for the individual.

Additionally, some officers viewed the restrictions on integration as an indication of special treatment for women. Les Hine, superintendent of Auckland maximum security prison in Paremoremo from 1985 to 1987, toured Australia and saw females working in prisons prior to their introduction here, reporting back to the New Zealand prison service on his views. One of Hine's main points was the importance of not giving females sedentary work away from the 'coalface.' If women were to be paid the same wage as men and under the same title of correctional officer, they needed to be completing the same tasks.<sup>44</sup>

The Working Party concluded that introduction within minimum security prisons was a desirable starting point; subsequent development was not restricted to a time frame in order to "avoid the suggestion of discrimination."<sup>45</sup> The Working Party accordingly added the following rider to its recommendations: "That for the morale and harmony of the Prison Service, integration should commence in all prisons at once instead of a gradual basis as originally proposed."<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Les Hine (retired correctional officer), in discussion with author, November 2019.

<sup>45</sup> Bell and Department of Justice New Zealand, *Working Party for the Integration of the New Zealand Prison Service*, 18.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.



The integration of female staff also had implications for male staff already employed in women's prisons. These officers, under the current regulations prior to 1985, were not permitted to carry keys or be in charge of female quarters. Such restrictions, the Working Party believed, were no longer appropriate, as male staff in women's prisons should "perform the same duties and have the same opportunities for advancement as female officers in male institutions" subject to safeguards for privacy.<sup>47</sup> Subsequently, changes were proposed to the Penal Institutions Regulations and General Orders under the Working Party's next term of reference. Other changes to the Penal Institutions General Orders included the removal of sexist language.

Since their employment in men's prisons in the 1970s, female officers have not been able to search male inmates, an issue which appeared in various cases in the US Court throughout the 20th century. This, however, was thoroughly discussed in the Working Party Integration Report, where it was determined that the precedent in New Zealand in that male officers have been employed in women's prisons for several years now provides a good basis for future practice.<sup>48</sup> It was intended that female staff perform all duties "save those involving the searching of inmates as presently applies in female institutions."<sup>49</sup> Additionally, it was considered that the existing requirement of having two officers present during inmate searches should be retained as a protection against allegations of unprofessional behaviour. Also, building changes were required to further protect inmate privacy before female officers could begin performing their duties. These changes included the provision of toilet doors and shower partitions, providing an individual changing area which was subject to supervision without infringing on inmate privacy. In addition, the Working Party was advised that certain facilities were shared by staff and inmates. Therefore, it was recommended that staff only restrooms be provided in all prisons.<sup>50</sup>

Despite these advancements in legislation regarding equal opportunities for female officers, the Ministerial Committee of Inquiry into the Prisons Systems, titled *Te Ara Hou: The New Way*,

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

published in 1989, highlighted the ongoing issues.<sup>51</sup> The review noted although women were well represented in the clerical division of corrections, only 41 of the 1,622 correctional officers were women. Additionally, only one out of 19 superintendents was a woman.<sup>52</sup> The Committee outlined they had received several submissions from correctional officers. Inmates, and the Human Rights Commission regarding the employment of female officers; overall however, the problems feared with the employment of female officers, such as women not being able to defend themselves, issues with strip searching, and the assumption women would be more vulnerable, have not arisen.<sup>53</sup> In order to encourage women to apply for a corrections role, the Committee recommended the Department “set up, or contribute to the setting up of, child-care centres for the children of public servants.”<sup>54</sup>

### Pay/Wages

In the US, the role of a correctional officer is attractive to some due to the salary. In 1992, the average salary for entry level recruits in the US was \$18,077 (around \$35,000 NZD), which increased to \$19,193 at the completion of pre-service training, and again to \$20,233 at the completion of the probationary period. The salary reached a maximum of \$28,952 (around \$48,000 NZD) at the time Feinman’s work was published in 1994.<sup>55</sup> Fourteen states started at salaries over \$20,000, and Alaska started at \$35,000. Given the average salary was approximately \$14,000 (around \$13,750 NZD) in 1979 and \$16,430 (around \$25,500 NZD) in 1988, the steady increase in salary for a correctional officer made the job attractive, especially for those with only a high school diploma.<sup>56</sup>

In New Zealand however, the salary for correctional officers has differed in comparison with the country’s national average. From the data recorded at the New Zealand Archives, as shown in Figure 5, the salary in 1980 for a female correctional officer with no higher qualification (such as first, second, or third officer) began at \$9,297 and did not exceed \$11,150. By 1987, the lowest salary was \$20,818, and did not exceed \$26,750. In just seven years, the maximum wage had increased 2.9

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<sup>51</sup> Clinton Roper and System New Zealand. Committee of Inquiry into the Prisons, *Prison Review: Te Ara Hou = The New Way*, (Wellington, New Zealand, 1989).

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 76.

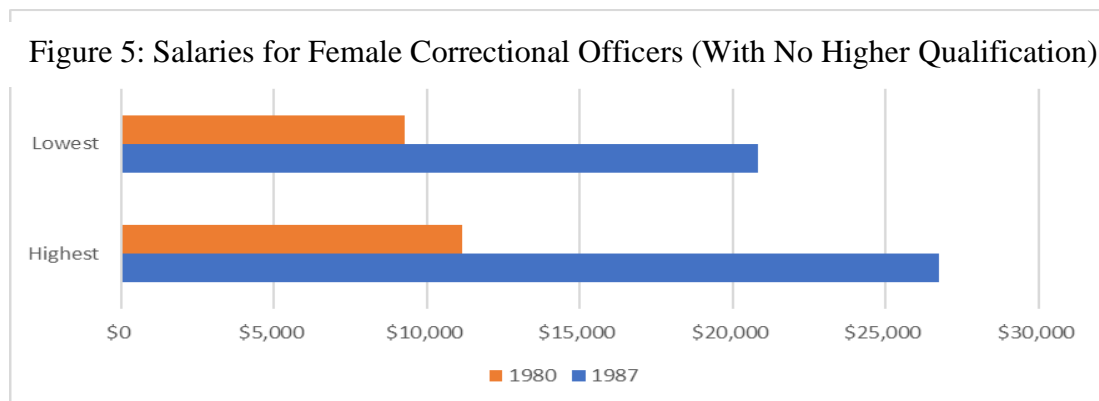
<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>55</sup> Feinman, *Women in the Criminal Justice System*, 169.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

percent. Moreover, the minimum wage in 1987 was 1.8 percent higher than the maximum wage in 1980. When compared to the average income in New Zealand in 1987 which was \$22,400, the lower salary range for a female officer was slightly below, but the higher range exceeded the average.<sup>57</sup>



As seen in Table 2, and contrary to assumptions, there has not been a large pay gap between male and female officers in New Zealand. From 2004, the wage for both male and female officers increased annually, and were relatively on par with each other. In fact, in certain years the average wage for female officers has been higher than that of male officers. In June 2004, the average wage for female officers was \$40,972, with men earning on average \$740 more, at an average of \$41,712. By June 2010, the average wage for female officers had surpassed that of the male officers, at \$52,115, with the average for male officers, \$300 less, at \$51,815. As of June 2018, the average female officer wage of \$61,352 had again dropped slightly below the average male officer wage of \$62,083; a difference of \$731.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Statistics New Zealand, *The New Zealand Official 1990 Year Book* (1990).

<sup>58</sup> Department of Corrections. "Average Salary of Corrections Officers, Senior Corrections Officers and Principal Corrections Officers by Year. Information Received through the Official Information Act, April 2019.

<b>Table 2: Average Salary of Correctional Officers, Senior Correctional Officers and Principal Correctional Officers by Year.</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
<b>Jun-04</b>	\$ 40,972	\$ 41,712
<b>Jun-05</b>	\$ 40,460	\$ 41,722
<b>Jun-06</b>	\$ 41,240	\$ 42,166
<b>Jun-07</b>	\$ 48,374	\$ 48,468
<b>Jun-08</b>	\$ 50,199	\$ 50,511
<b>Jun-09</b>	\$ 52,005	\$ 52,064
<b>Jun-10</b>	\$ 52,115	\$ 51,815
<b>Jun-11</b>	\$ 53,521	\$ 52,983
<b>Jun-12</b>	\$ 54,746	\$ 53,987
<b>Jun-13</b>	\$ 55,596	\$ 55,205
<b>Jun-14</b>	\$ 56,952	\$ 56,550
<b>Jun-15</b>	\$ 58,409	\$ 58,041
<b>Jun-16</b>	\$ 60,029	\$ 59,820
<b>Jun-17</b>	\$ 59,765	\$ 60,484
<b>Jun-18</b>	\$ 61,352	\$ 62,083

Despite discrepancies not seen within the comparison of wages for male and female officers, male officers received nominal ‘perks’ which were not initially available to their female counterparts. For example, prior to 1985, female officers contributed compulsorily to the Superannuation Scheme, but their spouses did not receive any benefit if the female officer were to die. This benefit was available to the wives of male officers, however. This was examined by the Working Party during the Integration Process in 1985 and it was determined that the benefits of the scheme should be the same for all officers.<sup>59</sup>

### Childcare & Maternity Leave

Despite their advancements in the workforce in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, women have continued to provide a disproportionate share of home, child and extended responsibilities. This is the

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<sup>59</sup> Bell and Department of Justice NZ. *Working Party for the Integration of the New Zealand Prison Service*, 9.

case for many female correctional officers. However, predominant models of paid work do not allow for the incorporation of day-to-day childcare and children, and other responsibilities. All reports regarding the status of women in New Zealand recognise clearly that unless men and women have equal responsibility for the care of their children, women will never achieve equality with men. As Dann proposed, “the hand that rocks the cradle does not rule the world.”<sup>60</sup> A major demand of the Women’s Liberation Movement in New Zealand was free 24 hour child-care centres: free because they believed child-care centres should provide enriching experiences for the child and be available to all sectors of society; and 24 hours, not so that children could be dumped there indefinitely, as opponents asserted, but so children of parents who were ill or working shifts could be properly cared for.<sup>61</sup> The refusal of local or national governments, and most employers, to take responsibility for the child care needs of workers did not prevent mothers from taking available jobs - it merely meant a proliferation of makeshift childcare arrangements.<sup>62</sup>

In 1980, a Submission of the Human Rights Commission was made to the members of the Labour Select Committee regarding the *Maternity Leave and Employment Protection Bill*. The Human Rights Commission argued the Bill was “contrary to the spirit and intention of the Human Rights Commission Act 1977” and did not align with the ‘enlightened social policy manifest’ in such legislation as the *Human Rights Commission Act 1977*, the *Equal Pay Act 1972*, and the *Matrimonial Property Act 1976*.<sup>63</sup> Each of the aforementioned Acts exemplified the legislative recognition of the principal of equality of the sexes in modern society. The *Maternity Leave and Employment Protection Bill*, however, had the potential to negate the purpose of the *Human Rights Commission Act* by “causing further discrimination against women in their employment opportunities and career advancement.” A Maternity Leave Bill which focused solely on the role of mothers could “make employers reluctant, even loath, to employ women. Any legislation having the effect of further

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<sup>60</sup>Geraldine McDonald, "Education and the Movement Towards Equality," in *Women in New Zealand Society*, ed. Phillida Bunkle and Beryl Hughes (Sydney, Australia: George Allan & Unwin, 1980), 151.

<sup>61</sup> Christine Dann, *Up from Under: Women and Liberation in New Zealand, 1970–1985* (Wellington, New Zealand: Allen & Unwin New Zealand Limited, 1985), 70.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>63</sup> Human Rights Commission, A Submission of the Human Rights Commission to the Members of the Labour Select Committee on the Maternity Leave and Employment Correction Bill. (New Zealand, 1980), 2-3.

inhibiting equal opportunity for women and reinforcing sex-role stereotypes would be a retrograde step in New Zealand's social development."<sup>64</sup>

The submission outlined the duty of the law to accommodate "new definitions of sex-roles and equalization of parental responsibilities."<sup>65</sup> In doing so, women must not be seen only as wives and mothers, whilst work must not be grounded on the life pattern of men with its associated freedom from childbearing and rearing. Some families may even find it more convenient for the man rather than the woman to take part or all of the Parental Leave. Moreover, the growing number of women in the workforce and the increasing economic reliance of the family on two working parents testified to the financial desirability of both parent's contribution to raising their children.

In 1986, part-time work in the public sector, including in corrections, was given permanent status. This enabled women, who made up the majority of New Zealand's part time workers, to better combine a professional career with domestic responsibilities.<sup>66</sup> Another area which became a focus was childcare, or lack thereof, which had been one of the biggest barriers for women entering the workforce. This allowed women to accept full time work and not be concerned over the welfare of their children. Employers also benefited from these changes, as they became able to retain experienced and trained staff.<sup>67</sup> However, as legislative changes were made to part time work, this was not echoed with full time employment. In corrections, absence or tardiness may jeopardize an entire unit, and shift coverage is constantly in demand.<sup>68</sup>

The lack of pregnancy leave within corrections agencies highlights the tension between a female correctional officer's work and family responsibilities. Initially, some corrections agencies forced pregnant women to take leaves of absences, or resign, which caused financial hardship and disadvantaged women for future promotions. The inadequate implementation of policies and procedures surrounding maternity leave, or an absence of them altogether, forced female officers to

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 3-4.

<sup>66</sup> Alison Bartley, "Equal Employment Opportunities in the Public Sector," *Public Sector* 16, no. 2 (1993), 2.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Martin and Jurik, *Doing Justice, Doing Gender*, 189.

choose between their families and their careers. Therefore, many found themselves deferring advancements.<sup>69</sup>

In late December 1987, the State Services Commission circulated a memorandum detailing the new parental leave entitlements for female and male employees, titled the *Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act*.<sup>70</sup> The provisions were to ensure that employees who must be absent from work on parental leave are able to return to work in their previous position.<sup>71</sup> The new provisions required a two month notice period of an intention to take and return from parental leave. The longer notice period was introduced in response to departmental planning difficulties associated with maternity leave and double administration that will be involved as a result of the new entitlement for male employees. Parental leave of up to 52 weeks could be granted to employees in the Public Service with at least one year's service; for those with less than one year's service, parental leave for up to 26 weeks could be granted.<sup>72</sup>

### Women in Corrections Today

As of March 2019, women represented 48 percent (4713 individuals) of the total workforce within the Department of Corrections, with a 67 percent increase over the previous decade. Of those 4713 individuals, 1157 are correctional officers, or 24.5 percent. There are 1177 female correctional officers in prisons, with 857 of these women working in men's prisons.<sup>73</sup> At a managerial level, six prisons throughout New Zealand are managed by women. The appointment of Christine Stevenson in January 2019 as the Department of Corrections' interim Chief Executive meant women now make up half of the organizations' executive leadership team, which is comprised of 7 people.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 190.

<sup>70</sup> Ministry of Women's Affairs, *Status of Women in New Zealand: The Combined Third and Fourth Reports on New Zealand's Progress on Implementing the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women*. (Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Women's Affairs, 1998), 43.

<sup>71</sup> State Services Commission. Circular Memorandum 1987/140: *Parental Leave Provisions* (Wellington, New Zealand: Government Printer, 1987).

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Department of Corrections, "Number of Women Staff Up, Gender Pay Gap Down," 2019.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

Although some women today are still fighting for equal pay, the gender pay gap at the Department of Corrections continues to be significantly less than the Public Sector average. In 2015/16 the reported pay gap was 2.28 percent compared with the sector average of 14 percent.<sup>75</sup> By 2017/18, the gender pay gap had decreased to 1.64 percent, with the reported public sector average at more than 12 percent.<sup>76</sup> By March 2019, the gender pay gap was just 1.37 percent significantly lower than the public sector average of 12 percent.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Robert Jones, "Suicide in New Zealand Prisons - 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2016," *The New Zealand Corrections Journal* 5, no. 2 (2017), n.p.

<sup>76</sup> Department of Corrections, "Snapshot Showing the Number of Female and Male Corrections Officers, Senior Corrections and Principal Corrections Officers Per Year (Full Time Equivalent)," Received through the Official Information Act, April 2019.

<sup>77</sup> Department of Corrections, "Number of Women Staff Up, Gender Pay Gap Down."



## Experiences of Female Correctional Officers in New Zealand

For any comprehensive history of female correctional officers, it is essential to have both quantitative measures, such as statistics, and qualitative measures, such as interviews. Known as mixed methods research, utilising both qualitative and quantitative methods, is “an approach to knowledge (theory and practice) that attempts to consider multiple viewpoints, perspectives, positions, and standpoints.”<sup>1</sup> This chapter examines qualitative research involving female correctional officers, which is analysed alongside interviews in the current study with both male and female officers in order to gain the real life experiences, trials, and tribulations that the previously discussed data represents.

As stated by Mark Pogrebin and Eric Poole, what is almost entirely lacking from the examination of female correctional officers globally is a focus on the impact on the officers themselves. In their 1998 study, which included semi-structured interviews with 108 female deputies, there was “a pervasive expectation that jail guards should act in a manner consistent with the sex role expectations of the traditional male employee.”<sup>2</sup> They ascertained through interviews that attitudes around the inherent masculine nature of the job made the idea of a female co-worker offensive to some male staff. Men demand toughness, assertiveness, and physical strength demonstrated by their co-workers; yet, stereotypically women are not supposed to be tough, assertive or strong. As Pogrebin and Poole state, “Ironically, for the female officer to be judged as effective and competent, she must behave less like a woman and more like a man, which may threaten the male officer’s sense of masculinity. If the female officer uses feminine skills, she runs the risk of being perceived as unfit for jail work.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> R Burke Johnson, Anthony J Onwuegbuzie, and Lisa A Turner, "Toward a Definition of Mixed Methods Research," *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* 1, no. 2 (2007), 113.

<sup>2</sup> Mark R Pogrebin and Eric D Poole, "Women Deputies and Jail Work," *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 14, no. 2 (1998), 130.

<sup>3</sup> Pogrebin and Poole, "Women Deputies and Jail Work," 130-131.

Subsequently, Pogrebin and Poole found female officers were not accepted by their male counterparts, and therefore were denied a critical workplace coping mechanism for mitigating work stress – a forum between co-workers to vent safely.<sup>4</sup> Pogrebin and Poole concluded that to realize the needed change in organisational culture, the hierarchal control mechanisms and administrative pressures for worker uniformity, which served to reinforce and maintain traditional job stereotypes in the jail setting, needed to be removed.

### Reaction of Female Officers

Other qualitative research has examined the experience of female officers, specifically their reasons behind seeking employment, and their reactions when first employed within a men's prisons. In Belknap's 1991 study in the US, in support of Zimmer's 1986 American study, none of the women had aspired to become correctional officers; two of the primary reasons for choosing corrections were financial reasons and the lack of other opportunities. In Belknap's study, only 17 percent of the women reported choosing corrections because they wanted to help people or work with people.<sup>5</sup> These findings are also consistent with Jurik and Halemba's 1984 study in the US, in which the second and third most frequently stated reasons why women entered corrections were (respectively) that they viewed it as an entry-level position for other jobs in the department and because of income.<sup>6</sup> Interest in human services or inmate rehabilitation was the most frequently reported reason for choosing corrections.

Most of the women interviewed by this author did not know much about the role before joining, and many joined due to the need for employment and a solid income, rather than the desire to be a correctional officer. Kath, who began work as a correctional officer in 1996 after previously being a short-hand typist, still remembers walking up the big long corridor on her first trial day at work, shaking with nerves. At the meal parade she was so nervous about doing something wrong, she had not even contemplated her own safety. For Pam, who began as a correctional officer in 1988 to help

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>5</sup> Joanne Belknap, "Women in Conflict: An Analysis of Women Correctional Officers," *Women & Criminal Justice* 2, no. 2 (1991), 96.

<sup>6</sup> Belknap, "Women in Conflict," 96.

increase her household income, it took the first couple of years before the role truly sunk in, as she simply could not believe what she was seeing. Despite mixing with a variety of people in her life, from lawyers and doctors to bikie gangs, Pam could not understand why the male officers would act as they did; she “just didn’t get it.”<sup>7</sup> Pam felt she could have left dozens of times during her first few years and she hated the job because, for the first time, she felt out of her depth. She recalled that everyone knew everything about her, or so they thought.<sup>8</sup>

Kimberley, who began work as a correctional officer in 1991, had originally taught clerical skills, but had to find work elsewhere after relocating. She did not give the job much thought when she applied, and her first day was one she will not forget. She was escorted to a wing and was handed over to a couple of less than impressed officers, who told her to, “go down there, and stand, and observe.”<sup>9</sup> She remembers standing between two cells, back up against the wall, watching inmates walk by her and thinking that any minute she could get dragged away and the officers would not take any notice.

Nellie was first employed at Christchurch Women’s prison in 1988, giving her a different environment to learn the job in compared to the other interviewees who began work at a men’s prison. She felt she was a bit naïve at the start, and had not really given the job much thought, only applying due to the salary. She moved to Christchurch men’s prison after she realised that not many females were employed there at that stage, and wanted to see what it was like. She also wanted to move through the ranks and believed she would have better opportunities at the men’s prison.<sup>10</sup>

Unlike most of the women interviewed, Wendy had met a lot of correctional officers prior to her employment as an officer herself, when they used to have a drink at a local hotel she worked at. She would often ask questions about the job and therefore, knew what to expect to a degree when she applied. In her late teens she was also involved in her local Rotaract club where games of netball with inmates were held, followed by afternoon tea. Therefore, she had been around inmates as well, prior to becoming an officer in 1989. Heather, who had a background in counselling and sexual violence

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<sup>7</sup> Pam Boon (retired correctional officer), in discussion with author, October 2019.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Kimberley Simpson (retired correctional officer), in discussion with author, September 2019.

<sup>10</sup> Nellie (retired correctional officer), in discussion with author, September 2019.

education, also had a relative understanding of the prison system prior to seeking employment in 1997, having discussed the job with her friend Celia Lashlie, and had also completed a tour of a couple of prisons as a visitor.<sup>11</sup>

Renee Pene and Gay Kinnel-Hart, two of the first female officers employed in a men's prison in the 1980s, were stationed at Tongariro prison farm, a minimum-security prison.<sup>12</sup> In a 1989 interview with *Women's Weekly*, the women recalled that although they were nervous, their overall treatment by inmates was not as feared. Renee commented that the more confidence the officers exuded the more inmates left them alone. She believed inmates saw the uniform before anything else, although she did receive some comments about being female from half a dozen inmates. Gay stated that unusual comments and lurid invitations were firmly dealt with or ignored. For instance, when completing the muster count, some inmates would use the opportunity to try and shock female officers as they checked the showers. Thus, wooden shower doors were one of the few additions made when female officers began work.<sup>13</sup> Some inmates pushed the boundaries with female officers on night shift, often masturbating in their cells when officers were doing night checks, for example.<sup>14</sup>

### Reaction from Male Officers

As seen in other Western countries, the integration of female officers was not a smooth process for all involved in New Zealand, with resistance faced from several groups affected in varying degrees. There was a lot of opposition to the idea of females working in men's prisons, as it was thought that women should not go into such places. The Working Party's Integration Report predicted that the process of integrating female officers would not be without conflict.<sup>15</sup> The increase in female officers

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<sup>11</sup> Wendy Moreland (retired correctional officer), in discussion with author, October 2019.

<sup>12</sup> Unknown, "Women At Work," *Women's Weekly*, 6th February 1989, 36.

<sup>13</sup> Unknown, "Women At Work," 38.

<sup>14</sup> Kimberley Simpson interview; Wendy Moreland interview; Nellie interview.

<sup>15</sup> Rae Bell and Department of Justice New Zealand, *Working Party for the Integration of the New Zealand Prison Service*. (Wellington, New Zealand: Department of Justice), 1985.

employed in men's prisons led to the rise in resentment and hostility of some male officers and administrators, with sexual harassment becoming more deliberate.<sup>16</sup>

International studies found many male prison administrators and officers were either strongly opposed to the presence of female officers, or were concerned about the consequences of their presence in a men's prison.<sup>17</sup> Female officers found the most resentment and resistance came from male officers who had been working for a lengthy period, as well as prison administrators whose jobs became harder when they had both male and female officers to employ. Younger or newer male officers, and most inmates themselves, had no issue with female officers within men's prisons.<sup>18</sup> Research consistently concluded that male correctional officers were generally opposed to having women correctional officers as they felt that females would be unable to control male inmates, and that some of their feminine traits such as being fearful, weak, and seductive would make them a danger to themselves and to the other officers.<sup>19</sup>

A 1992 case study by Louise Farnworth discusses the integration of female officers into Pentridge prison, an Australian prison with a 'traditionally male prison environment.'<sup>20</sup> Interviews were conducted based on the belief that females would face difficulty due to the role of a prison officer being 'male-stereotyped.' Farnworth's study found key issues behind resentment by male officers, resulting in integration difficulties for female officers, such as: strip searching male inmates, managing violent inmates, and inequality of assignment, all of which had a direct bearing on the promotion of female officers employed.<sup>21</sup> Several forms of integration difficulties were also highlighted within the study, including tokenism, occupational socialisation difficulties, and harassment.

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<sup>16</sup> Clarice Feinman, *Women in the Criminal Justice System*, 3rd ed. (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1994), 176.

<sup>17</sup> Mary Ann Farkas and Kathryn Rand, "Female Correctional Officers and Prisoner Privacy," *Marquette Law Review* 80 (1996), 995.

<sup>18</sup> Mary Ann Farkas, "Inmate Supervisory Style: Does Gender Make A Difference?" *Women and Criminal Justice* 10, no. 4 (2000), 30.

<sup>19</sup> Joseph R Carlson, George Thomas, and Richard H Anson, "Cross-Gender Perceptions of Corrections Officers in Gender-Segregated Prisons," *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation* 39, no. 1 (2004), 84.

<sup>20</sup> Louise Farnworth, "Women Doing a Man's Job: Female Prison Officers Working in a Male Prison," *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology* 25 (1992).

<sup>21</sup> Farnworth, "Women Doing a Man's Job," 283.

A 2002 study by Hemmens et al. examined the perception of female correctional staff by prison workers in the US. The study noted that based on previous research, it was expected the staff response would conform to the hypotheses that most male and female staff would be supportive of women working in corrections. Overall, perceptions of female staff were positive; most staff recognized that gender and sexual harassment types of behaviour, including jokes, putdowns, and sexual relations between staff and inmates, were not acceptable practices in their institutions.<sup>22</sup> The results also confirmed, as found with previous research, that after more than twenty years of females being employed as corrections staff in men's institutions in the US, the type of institution and the gender and military composition of its staff did influence the perceptions of female correctional officers' abilities in the work environment.

Research progressed from interactional barriers faced by female correctional officers, as organisational barriers began to be investigated. Two such explanatory models developed in an attempt to ascertain whether gender role differences existed: the gender model and the job model.<sup>23</sup> The effect of the employment context on the advancement opportunities for female officers demonstrated the relevance of both organisational dynamics and individual attitudes in developing more comprehensive explanations of the difficulties women experienced in non-traditional occupations. Nancy Jurik (1985) concluded that an understanding of the workplace environment provided insight into the hostile and suspicious responses of male co-workers and supervisors towards female officers. Such hostility was not simply the outcome of pre-existing sexist attitudes but was also continuing behaviour perpetrated by this environment.<sup>24</sup>

Jurik used in-depth interviews and data obtained from observations and informal conversations with personnel and inmates at six different prison facilities in the US' Western Department of Corrections. The explanatory study concluded the full integration of female officers was hindered by informal organisational resistance and the conflicting nature of work, not just the psychological traits and

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<sup>22</sup> Craig Hemmens et al., "One Step Up, Two Steps Back: The Progression of Perceptions of Women's Work in Prisons and Jails," *Journal of Criminal Justice* 30, no. 6 (2002), 486.

<sup>23</sup> Full definition in introduction.

<sup>24</sup> Nancy C Jurik, "An Officer and a Lady: Organizational Barriers to Women Working as Correctional Officers in Men's Prisons," *Social Problems* 32, no. 4 (1985), 376.

attitudes of supervisors, colleagues, clients and workers, which cannot be considered solely responsible.<sup>25</sup> Jurik concluded that further research was needed to understand the interplay of organisational and individual factors on women's advancement in non-traditional careers.<sup>26</sup>

In a 1986 interview by Rita J. Simon and Judith D. Simon in the US, the interviewee, a young, middle-class, white female officer, detailed her experience in a men's prison. The interviewee found the attitudes of new male officers to be accepting and respectful, whilst the male officers who had worked for the city or been with the state for a lengthy period were more likely to resent women generally, and many indicated their disapproval of women working in men's prisons.<sup>27</sup> Despite fear by some male officers, the interviewee never witnessed a male officer threatened or endangered by having to work alongside a female officer.<sup>28</sup>

Most researchers recognise the importance and influence of both models working simultaneously. However, Joanne Belknap believe it is likely one may be more important than the other, and a clearer understanding of female correctional officers could be obtained by determining whether this was the case. Therefore, in 1991, Belknap completed an extensive study in the US via a series of interviews to determine if one model was more influential.<sup>29</sup> Attitudes around perceptions of gender equality regarding opportunities, expectations and training; sex preferences for inmates, supervisors, and officers; sexual and gender harassment; perceptions around gender differences in behaviour and effectiveness; and finally, the respondents perception of the importance of social structure (the gender model) versus organisational structure (the job model) were all examined.<sup>30</sup>

The results found 70 percent of respondents believed the manner in which females are 'conditioned' and raised affected how they performed their jobs, whilst 51 percent believed the manner in which the

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<sup>25</sup> Jurik, "An Officer and a Lady," 386.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 386-87.

<sup>27</sup> Rita J. Simon and Judith D. Simon, "Female Guards in Men's Prisons," in *It's a Crime: Women and Justice*, ed. Roslyn Muraskin and Ted Alleman (New Jersey, US: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 234-35.

<sup>28</sup> Simon and Simon, "Female Guards in Men's Prisons," 237, 40.

<sup>29</sup> Joanne Belknap, "Women in Conflict: An Analysis of Women Correctional Officers," *Women & Criminal Justice* 2, no. 2 (1991), 90.

<sup>30</sup> Belknap, "Women in Conflict," 90-91.

job was structured affected how men and women performed the job.<sup>31</sup> When asked directly whether they thought the differences between male and female officers resulted more from gender differences in society (the gender model), or from how the job was structured (the job model), 43 percent stated the role of society was dominant, whilst 37 percent said job structure was more dominant, and 17 percent believed both had equal roles in determining gender differences.<sup>32</sup>

The results of Belknap's analysis were contradicted by a 1994 study by Nancy Jurik and Gregory Halembe in the US, which failed to demonstrate much support for gender as a primary explanatory variable. Generally, the findings supported the job model, which suggested the attitudes of female correctional officers were a function of their position in the organisational structure, as well as immediate working conditions.<sup>33</sup> Female officers exhibited equal ambition and commitment to their career as men. When examining the demographics of the male and female officers, the female respondents tended to be more highly educated, come from more urban and professional families, and have contrasting occupational backgrounds. Despite these predispositional differences, overall female officers exhibited largely the same attitudes towards work as their male counterparts. Jurik and Halembe concluded it appeared the increasing availability of corrections work for women (the extension of opportunities to work in men's prisons) has resulted in the recruitment of female officers who were both more highly educated and more orientated towards intrinsic characteristics of a career in corrections than male officers.<sup>34</sup>

The findings from the above studies are applicable to the New Zealand context, as many females faced resistance from male officers and management. Barbara Jamieson, the first female officer in Christchurch men's prison, remembers how things were in 1986. The men were adamant women were

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>33</sup> Nancy C Jurik and Gregory J Halembe, "Gender, Working Conditions and the Job Satisfaction of Women in a Non-Traditional Occupation: Female Correctional Officers in Men's Prisons," *Sociological Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (1984), 563-64.

<sup>34</sup> Jurik and Halembe, "Gender, Working Conditions and the Job Satisfaction of Women in a Non-Traditional Occupation," 564.



not coming in, it was ‘their’ prison.<sup>35</sup> In a 1993 *Mana Tangata* article, Novena McGuckin, who had previously worked at Arohata women’s prison, stated that female officers faced many prejudices, and a lot more was expected of you; she felt you had to be twice as good as a male officer.<sup>36</sup> A female officer interviewed by Patricia Sarr in 1995 summarised her situation by stating “I was the visible representation of change, and I was even more visible because I was a woman. I often think of myself as grit in the prison’s eye ... like any foreign body the body tries to spew it out. That’s how I saw myself. I don’t think it was personal.”<sup>37</sup> These accounts support Jurik and Halemba’s findings, in which the women believed themselves capable of the role, but faced resistance from the entrenched values associated with the organisation.

When interviewed in the current study, several interviewees recounted examples of both the job and gender model when discussing the integration of female officers. However, the main conclusion from the interviews was that initially for most male officers, it was simply uncharted territory; the introduction of females was a completely unknown playing field to male officers, and changed the whole environment in prison; nobody knew how it was going to work.<sup>38</sup> Brian, who became an officer at Paparua prison in 1980, recalled that he and his colleagues who had been working at the prison for a considerable amount of time, “knew what they were involved in, but with ladies, it was a totally different ballgame.”<sup>39</sup> Therefore, Brian felt it was instinctual for male officers to feel the need to look out for female officers on shift; he recounted, “you know how you look after your wife, don’t you, or your partner, and it’s just a natural instinct that you do.”<sup>40</sup> Aside from a few minor issues, such as female officers struggling with the old, stiff locks on prison doors, Brian believes their introduction was a success, and that the women coped well in a daunting situation. He stated it was a bigger challenge for the female officers coming into a volatile situation, than for the male officers.

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<sup>35</sup> Unknown, “Women Corrections Officers Recall Bad Times, Good Times,” *Public Service Association Journal*, no. June (2004).

<sup>36</sup> Unknown, “Women Corrections Officers Recall Bad Times, Good Times.”

<sup>37</sup> Sarr, “Corrections: Recent Attempts at Workplace Reform and Managing Changing in New Zealand Prisons.” A Thesis Submitted to the Victoria University of Wellington in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Public Policy, (Wellington, New Zealand: University of Wellington, 1995), 143.

<sup>38</sup> David Shelton (retired correctional officer), in discussion with author, August 2019.

<sup>39</sup> Brian Hatrill (retired correctional officer), in discussion with author, October 2019.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

Bill Cunneen who was a First Officer at Paparua prison when females began their employment, recalled little negativity from his officers. Although many were hesitant and unsure about having women working in prison, only one officer openly voiced his concerns to Bill.<sup>41</sup> Bill spoke highly of the female staff who were employed under him, and considered them excellent and devoted officers.<sup>42</sup> Les Hine faced resistance from an unpredicted group of individuals: the wives of current officers. This point was also noted by Celia Lashlie when she first began work in a men's prison. The women were not happy with their husbands working in such close conditions alongside females, often with only the two of them present.<sup>43</sup> Brian found that some staff simply could not accept the change in structure. He and fellow staff pulled these men up who made remarks towards and about female officers, which were not needed.<sup>44</sup>

Other interviewees recalled blatant discrimination. Pam often felt discriminated against by male officers because she was a young woman, and also one of the first females employed in Paparua prison. She referred back to one incident where she had to go to the kit locker and see the male officer in charge as the zipper on her pants had broken. She changed pants, waited for the zipper to be fixed, and then changed back, before returning to her shift. Before even making it back to her post, a rumour had spread around the prison that she had "dropped her pants in the kit locker."<sup>45</sup> An officer had walked in during the exchange to drop something off and had observed what was going on. In Pam's words, the officers "acted like children."<sup>46</sup> She did recall however, that over the years male officers came to her and apologise for their actions.<sup>47</sup>

When Kath first began working at Paparua prison, her manager was accused of having inappropriate relations an inmate, and the staff were in the process of starting a petition against him. When Kath did not sign the petition, as she had not witnessed any of the behaviour herself, the staff accused her of being involved and turned against her. She was locked out of the guard room during winter and had to

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<sup>41</sup> Bill Cunneen (retired correctional officer), in discussion with author, October 2019.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Les Hine interview.

<sup>44</sup> Brian Hatrill interview.

<sup>45</sup> Pam Boon interview.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

walk around the compound for most of her shift. She would often begin a cell search but have to stop when she was summoned over the radio to complete a task that the male officers did not want to do, such as opening the gates for kitchen delivery. She remembers each time, walking past the guard room and seeing the male officers smoking, drinking coffee with their feet on the table, jeering at her.<sup>48</sup> Kath found the officers too nasty, and she was eventually moved to another unit once management noticed the behaviour. Interestingly, as with Pam, the officers did apologise to Kath a few months later, as it became known she was not involved with the manager's actions.<sup>49</sup>

In Sarr's 1995 work in New Zealand, the women ruefully spoke of when they had 'gone in alone' when no man would, where they did not seek help because they felt they should have been able to cope on their own.<sup>50</sup> In some situations, these women felt they had 'been like lambs to the slaughter' as they did not insist on getting support. Despite resistance from officers, many interviewed believed that if they needed back up in a dangerous situation, male officers would provide assistance.

In the interviews for this study, Kimberley remarked, "they wouldn't back you up against anything else, but against an inmate, they were there!"<sup>51</sup> Kath also believed that if a situation arose, even though the staff did not like her, they would be right there beside her.<sup>52</sup> However, not all felt the same; Heather faced resistance from male officers, and felt for sure that if a situation arose, certain officers would not have her back. Heather recalled a time when she was left alone by a male officer in the kitchen with six inmates who all had access to knives. Although most inmates were fine, a couple were misogynistic, and Heather felt quite threatened.<sup>53</sup>

Although some female officers may not have faced open resistance to their employment, some were still restricted in their role by male officers, who believed that women could not handle certain aspects of the job. Nellie found that female officers, for instance, were not allowed to deal with inmates down

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<sup>48</sup> Kath Stills (retired correctional officer), in discussion with author, October 2019.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Sarr, "Corrections," 143.

<sup>51</sup> Kimberley Simpson interview.

<sup>52</sup> Kath Stills interview.

<sup>53</sup> Heather Smyth (retired correctional officer), in discussion with author, August 2019.

in the punishment area, and take them their meals.<sup>54</sup> In addition, some female officers were pressured to complete tasks and given extra work by male officers, even if it impacted their ability to fulfil their role, or was a security risk. Heather was often told to complete not only her computer work, but the computer work of her male officers, many of which were not computer savvy. The male officers would not let Heather complete her other jobs until she had completed their paperwork.<sup>55</sup>

Additionally, Heather was made to walk across to the main prison every morning and get the mail. She recounted, “it wasn’t my job, but they’d make me go.”<sup>56</sup> She could remember every morning of her three month rotation, walking to the main jail saying, “what the fuck are you doing here Heather, this is ridiculous!”<sup>57</sup> Due to the nature of the response from male officers, the issues of isolation for female officers were compounded.

Male officers lacked a sense of security when partnered with a female officer, with many concerned as to whether a woman could back them up when needed.<sup>58</sup> It was also unclear to some whether women could fulfil the job to the same level as a man; therefore, some women interviewed felt they had to work harder than their male counterparts in order to gain the same respect. Kimberley stated, “I found that women used to have to do twice the work of the busiest man to be accepted halfway as much as the laziest man,” a point which appeared in another account from a female officer.<sup>59</sup>

However, Paul, a male officer who began work after the integration of female officers, in 1992, believed this was a perception held by the women; as he explains, he and fellow officers were happy to work alongside females, or any officer, “just as long as you do your job and you make sure you look after each other.”<sup>60</sup>

Resistance to female officers was especially pertinent in Auckland’s maximum security prison in Paremoremo, where officers had voted not to work with women when they initially began employment in 1985, and their refusal had been unchallenged. This stand against the employment of

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<sup>54</sup> Nellie interview.

<sup>55</sup> Heather Smyth interview.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> David Shelton interview.

<sup>59</sup> Kimberley Simpson interview.

<sup>60</sup> Paul Ballantyne (retired correctional officer), in discussion with author, October 2019.

female officers was only quashed through government legislation, when the *1988 State Sector Act* was introduced.<sup>61</sup> In an interview with *The Listener*, Hamilton Samuels, a male officer, stated many of the male officers thought they would have to carry the women and felt personally responsible for their safety. By the time the interview was conducted in 1992 however, Samuels stated that “a few of the guys [inmates] tried them out, thinking they’d get an easy ride. But they soon found out they’re not a soft touch.”<sup>62</sup> Trevor Twin, another officer interviewed in the same article openly admitted he did not want women backing him up, but soon came to respect the female officers. However, he still harboured lingering reservations, as there were inborn feelings that a man has to protect a woman, and that time would not change that.<sup>63</sup>

As Equal Employment Opportunities coordinator, Celia Lashlie became aware of several female officers who were ignored, ridiculed, insulted, assaulted, and subjected to indecent suggestions by male officers, which caused many to resign. Such difficulties were discussed at a hui held in 1989 for female officers in men’s prisons. Lashlie, who attended the hui, stated she would never forget the introductory session; within five minutes, women were standing to speak with tears running down their cheeks, struggling to find the words to describe their experiences in men’s prisons.<sup>64</sup> Women described being ignored by male colleagues, despite working at the same prisons for over three years, whilst others had experienced harassment, some even extending to physical assault. In her book, Lashlie detailed an example of harassment faced by a female officer in the presence of several inmates. As the officer preceded to tie her shoe, one of the male officers stepped forward, unzipped the fly of his trousers and remarked “while you’re down there...”. Other issues raised included improvements to the uniform, such as sizes more fitted for females.<sup>65</sup>

In 1991, an Inquiry into Invercargill prison found the first female officer appointed had been placed by herself in a yard with male inmates, subjected to unsubstantiated sexual accusations, had her

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<sup>61</sup> Greg Newbold, "Women Officers Working in Men's Prisons," *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand/Te Puna Whakaaro*, no. 25 (2005), 4.

<sup>62</sup> *The Listener*. 27 January 1992, 14-18.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> Celia Lashlie, *The Journey to Prison: Who Goes and Why* (Auckland, New Zealand: Harper Collins, 2002), 33.

<sup>65</sup> Lashlie, *The Journey to Prison*, 34-35.

handbag put in a toilet, and had received offensive phone calls, all by male colleagues. These events resulted in the officer being transferred to another prison, and several of the male staff disciplined.<sup>66</sup> This event was published in a *Dominion Sunday* article titled “Inquiry Looks at Sexism in Prison,” and follow-up article in the same newspaper published on 29<sup>th</sup> July, outlining the subsequent treatment of the officer after the Inquiry was held. According to the article, the female officer was treated like a ‘nark’ as other officers believed she had complained to authorities. She was subsequently removed from duty as superintendent Frank Blake could not guarantee her personal safety.<sup>67</sup> Contrary to the statements in the report, the officer did not know at the time of her appointment that she would be the first female officer at the prison, nor that the male staff had voted not to work with women; she commented, what person in their right mind would walk into a situation like that?”

Tim O’Connor, in his book on his career as a prison officer, writes that when female officers were introduced “quite a number of senior staff said it was a mistake while some thought it was a good idea.”<sup>68</sup> In O’Connor’s opinion, female officers were good counsellors and would listen to the inmates’ problems. However, he felt that ultimately, females should only be employed in women’s prisons and male officers in men’s prisons. To reiterate his point, O’Connor recalls an instance where a female officer was undertaking a muster and he felt he had to keep a close eye on her, as the wing was full of gang members, rapists and murderers, as he was afraid for the officer’s safety.<sup>69</sup> When asked their view on O’Connor’s opinion on female officers during their interviews in the current study, all interviewees disagreed. They felt females did have a place of employment in men’s prisons and that although issues arose, the overall positive impact of female officers outweighed these.

Despite these issues, women also brought to the job an improvement in the relationships between officers. The topics of discussion “weren’t just rugby, racing and beer for a change,” but discussions

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<sup>66</sup> Newbold, "Women Officers Working in Men's Prisons," 6.

<sup>67</sup> *Dominion Sunday*, 6 May 1990; *Dominion Sunday*, 9 July 1990.

<sup>68</sup> Thomas P. O'Connor, *Four Life Sentences*, (Rolleston, New Zealand: 2008), n.p.

<sup>69</sup> O'Connor, *Four Life Sentences*, n.p.

around family, and other more personal topics.<sup>70</sup> Through this, officers were able to form bonds and get to know each other behind the uniform. Nellie discussed her role in the Post Incident Response Team (PIRT). Prior to the establishment of this group, most officers involved in a serious incident (these officers were mostly men) would not seek or be given help with processing such an event and, as Nellie said, “would just go to the pub or go with their mates for a drink.” Nellie believes her work in PIRT helped her and her colleagues gain respect from the other officers, as they often went about their work behind the scenes and in a subtle manner. For example, Nellie recounts visiting officers in their home who had experienced a serious assault or suicide whilst on shift. She even pursued and completed counselling courses in her own time to further the skills she could offer this role.

The reactions of the male officers detailed in the interviews supports both the theory of organisational resistance through the job model, and the preconceived attitudes of the male officers. Whilst some female officers were able to integrate smoothly into the role, other females faced varying levels of resistance and hostility from their male colleagues. As outlined in the following section, the attitudes of those in managerial roles also shaped the experiences of female officers. Some female officers maintained they faced discrimination in regard to promotion, whilst others felt that their treatment by management impacted their willingness to report sexual harassment complaints or abuse from male colleagues.

### Reaction from Management

The female officers interviewed in the current study varied in their satisfaction with the treatment received from those in managerial positions. Whilst Wendy felt she was never discriminated against because of her gender, and had gained positive references and lovely commendations when she retired, Kimberley did not feel she received the same respect. She felt she was often stood over and did not have a choice in situations such as covering shifts for male officers who were playing sports. She believed that “if you said no you couldn’t do it or something, then things got worse.”<sup>71</sup> She recalls

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<sup>70</sup> David Shelton interview.

<sup>71</sup> Kimberley Simpson interview.

being told by her boss after she reported some anti-women behaviour, that if she did not like it to leave, as she was “taking a man’s job.”<sup>72</sup>

According to a 1997 article in *The Press*, a female officer at Auckland maximum security prison was repeatedly subjected to obscene and abusive language, pornographic material, threats, and intimidation by senior officers and managers in 1995 and 1996. As outlined in the woman’s statement, after submitting her grievances to managers and supervising officers, “no fair and impartial investigation took place and no disciplinary measures were taken.”<sup>73</sup> As a result of her complaint, the officer became subject to gossip, threats, intimidating behaviour and harassment by officers and managers in the west division of the prison, she claimed. She also alleged being physically assaulted and threatened by a senior staff member.<sup>74</sup>

The ill treatment of female officers by those in managerial positions has also been reported in women’s prisons. At Mount Eden women’s prison in 1998, a female officer was compensated \$12,000 by a court, after being harassed and assaulted by her manager.<sup>75</sup> Whilst working at Mount Eden, Beth McLeod was harassed, bullied and finally assaulted by a unit manager, Peter Martin. Martin refused McLeod sick days, banned her from the prison kitchen, and humiliated her over having her period. In October 1996, he accused her of sending a rose to an inmate – a charge officials later accepted as false – before gripping her arm and pushing her over. McLeod was forced to transfer to Christchurch men’s prison, after Martin was warned, but he retained his role as manager for “strong operational reasons.”<sup>76</sup> However, Martin was transferred to the same prison just two months later.

Some interviewees did not actively seek promotion, preferring to stay in frontline work; others found promotion difficult, partly due to resistance from male superiors. Despite having adequate experience, a great record, and the right attitude, females said they were passed over for promotion on numerous

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> *The Press*, 27 October 1997.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> *The Evening Post*, 29 June 1998.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.



occasions, for no credible reason.<sup>77</sup> As such, these officers sought employment in other prisons.<sup>78</sup>

Some, like Nellie, moved away from their families and commuted for many years between work and home.<sup>79</sup> In contrast, both Kath and Pam felt they were able to seek promotion when desired and did not feel discriminated against because of their gender during the process.<sup>80</sup>

### The Women's Network

The lack of institutional coping mechanisms for female staff was addressed in one New Zealand prison, after some female officers witnessed and experienced first-hand, the harassment and mistreatment of female officers in men's prisons. Kimberley Simpson re-established and ran a women's network, which acted as a support group for female officers. The network began at Paparua prison where Kimberley worked, but soon became nationwide, through the Public Service Association (PSA). In a 2004 *Public Service Association Journal*, article, which discussed a conference that female correctional officers attended, the women in attendance realised "just how far they have come since the dark days of the '80s. And also, how far there is to go."<sup>81</sup>

In running the network, Kimberley faced some resistance, including from fellow male officers. Some used to say, "why do you have a women's network, why don't we have a men's network?"

Kimberley's answer was always simple, "why don't you make one? I'm quite happy to sit here and look after the place while you go off to one." However, the majority of male officers were supportive of the women's network; many did not realise the harassment faced daily by female officers. In running the network Kimberley did face some resistance at a managerial level, but found she had full support of Human Resources (HR) and of the regional manager.<sup>82</sup>

The network continued to grow, and in 2001 a 'Women's Day' was held for female officers at a local manor in Tai Tapu, Canterbury. Various workshops were given, including doctors for women, life coaching, nutritionists, as well as a talk from a locally known and highly respected transgender

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<sup>77</sup> Kimberley Simpson interview; Nellie interview.

<sup>78</sup> Nellie interview; Bill Cunneen interview.

<sup>79</sup> Nellie interview.

<sup>80</sup> Kath Stills interview; Pam Boon interview.

<sup>81</sup> Unknown, "Women Corrections Officers Recall Bad Times, Good Times."

<sup>82</sup> Kimberley Simpson interview.

women, as transgender inmates were becoming more common. Kimberley also initiated and oversaw a mentoring program for female officers within her prison. In 2006, the network achieved the Pride Award, which was the first ever correctional officers' pride award.<sup>83</sup> The network raised issues and agendas with HR for resolution, and ideas were given life and the fundamental questions for a successful network were laid out: how to measure progress and success, how to implement ideas, how often to hold meetings and stay in touch with the women involved. Many women would not have sought help on their own, but having the support of fellow female officers who had similar experiences made the process easier for many. The women's network also tackled the issue of inappropriate relationships between female staff and male inmates.<sup>84</sup>

Whilst the network offered support as a collective, research outlined how many female officers individually utilised strategies and methods to assist them in their work as correctional officers. In 1988, Jurik examined five strategies common to female officers in the US, which change over time: the professional image, demonstrating unique skills, emphasising a team approach, using humour, and using sponsorship to enhance positive visibility. Some female officers adopted a professional approach to avoid being viewed as incompetent. This approach made the female officers appear thoroughly familiar with the rules (if they were not already), and applied these rules in a "courteous, consistent, and assertive manner."<sup>85</sup>

However, this strategy was partially responsible for the negative attitudes held by male officers; one officer commented "a lot of the female officers are so rules-orientated .... sometimes it's in those casual conversations that the officers learn the most about an inmate and can help him the most."<sup>86</sup> As a strategy, some female officers exhibited rare skills that were in demand, which gained recognition by prison management, making career advancements more achievable. By identifying themselves with a unique skill, female officers enhanced their visibility in a manner less threatening to their male

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<sup>83</sup> The annual PRIDE awards are the Department of Corrections' top honours that recognise staff who exhibit professionalism, responsiveness, integrity, diversity and efficiency and effectiveness.

<sup>84</sup> Kimberley Simpson interview.

<sup>85</sup> Nancy C Jurik, "Striking a Balance: Female Correctional Officers, Gender Role Stereotypes, and Male Prisons," *Sociological Inquiry* 58, no. 3 (1988), 296.

<sup>86</sup> Jurik, "Striking a Balance," 297.

colleagues, which also made them less susceptible to interference by co-workers for trying to ‘do a man’s job.’ For example, one female officer recalled “One of my supervisors saw that I could write. After a while, I got put on special assignment with the assistant superintendent to draft some policies. That helped me to gain the contacts and experience for moving upward.”<sup>87</sup>

A third strategy adopted was teamwork. Female officers took advantage of opportunities to assist co-workers during altercations. One female described her approach as, “I didn’t ever start anything but was always the first to jump in and back up a fellow officer when he got into anything.”<sup>88</sup> By doing this, it did not look like she was avoiding physical situations, as this would encourage the belief that women cannot handle such events. This approach also facilitated rapport among co-workers due to the emphasis on the need to assist one another in potentially dangerous circumstances.<sup>89</sup>

A method some officers used for developing a sense of friendship with co-workers, stopping unwelcome advances, and handling sexist remarks, was humour. Jurik stated 90 percent of female officers interviewed mentioned the importance of humour for dealing with male colleagues, and also inmates. However, the humour technique was not beneficial to all female officers, particularly in the case of co-worker harassment, as one female officer explained that she just did not have the same sense of humour as her male colleagues, or considered harassment appropriate, even if it was through humour. She stated, “I hate it. I get mad when they tease me.”<sup>90</sup> Moreover, a dilemma often faced was how friendly they should be to their male co-workers. One female officer deduced, “If I’m friendly, they think I’m coming on to them, and if I don’t deal with them at all, they say I’m frigid, or worse, a lesbian – a dyke.”<sup>91</sup>

The final strategy proposed by Jurik was sponsorship, which was similar to a mentoring system. In developing sponsorship, it was essential for women to find a balance between isolating themselves and being too ‘close’ with a sponsor. Being linked too closely could lead to rumours and criticism,

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 298.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 299.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 301.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 300.

defining the work relationship as a sexual liaison.<sup>92</sup> Female officers used, and still use, several strategies in order to gain respect and the potential for advancement in the workplace.

In her frequently cited 1986 study conducted in the US, Lynn Zimmer identified distinct methods which she attributed to women working in a non-traditional, predominantly male occupation. Zimmer outlined three 'female strategies:' the modified role, in which the female staff performed a limited range of duties and avoided inmate contact; the institutional role, where women worked in all posts and attempted to obey all formal rules, failing however to develop the flexibility for what was important for correctional work; and finally, the inventive role, where women allied themselves with male inmates, depending on them for support and assistance.<sup>93</sup>

As outlined by Jurik (1985) and Jurik and Halemba (1984), it was not only the attitudes of the officers which made the integration of female officers difficult, but the organisational resistance established from such an instructions as a men's prison, which can be very difficult to break. As outlined in the studies examined in this chapter, as well as the content from the interviews, it is clear that perhaps no job embodied the idea of 'machismo' more than those designed to control offenders, especially male inmates. In New Zealand specifically, many officers who resisted the introduction of female officers had been in the job for a lengthy period, and had entrenched values about corrections being a male dominated occupation.

The resistance faced by female officers from their colleagues and those in managerial positions hinders their ability to fulfil their role. The female officers face harassment in varying degrees, from remarks from colleagues to a sense of discrimination surrounding promotion from their managerial team. Support networks such as the Women's Network allow female officers to vent their frustrations and to seek resolution from issues such as harassment, which some officers felt that they could not bring to management on their own. Whilst for some the harassment declined as time progresses and the integration of female officers became more fixed as normal, some still face resistance right into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 301.

<sup>93</sup> Lynn Zimmer, *Women Guarding Men* (Chicago, US: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 146.

# 6

## Significance of Female Correctional Officers

Internationally, the significance of employing female officers in men's prisons since the late 1970s has been delved into, but most studies have only scratched the surface on how the inmates perceive correctional officers. Studies have instead made headway on how female officers interacted with their co-workers and administrators, as well as addressing female immersion in the correctional officer subculture and socialization in a traditionally male dominated environment.

One of the results of such research has demonstrated how women have a calming effect on male inmates, and may be especially successful at defusing potentially violent situations in the early phases of confrontations.<sup>1</sup> From his study in England, Crewe (2006), believes many relationships between male inmates and female officers are imprinted by forms of projection and fantasy. He states:

In the prison's lopsided sexual culture, female officers functioned widely as proxies for and representatives of other women: family members, objects of sexual desire or a more generalized conception of femininity. This contributed significantly to relationships that were generally more comfortable and less formal than those between prisoners and male officers. However, a corollary of this was that these relationships often carried an intense emotional charge. This was normally suppressed, but became particularly evident in situations when female officers had to exert authority, disrupting identities – whether chivalrous, sexual or filial – that allowed prisoners to function according to conventional masculine scripts.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kelly Ann Cheeseman and Robert Worley, "Women on the Wing: Inmate Perceptions about Female Correctional Officer Job Competency in a Southern Prison System," *Southwest Journal of Criminal Justice* 3, no. 2 (2006), 87.

<sup>2</sup> Ben Crewe, "Male prisoners' Orientations Towards Female Officers in an English Prison," *Punishment & Society* 8, no. 4 (2006), 411.

In the US in 1980, Peter Kissel and Paul Katsampes assessed the impact of female employment on the inmate population, male correctional officers, and female officers themselves.<sup>3</sup> Research indicated male officers and the majority of female officers felt satisfied with their performance of duties. Although most female officers felt capable of handling nearly all crisis situations, the majority of inmates felt male officers would be more successful in handling a crisis.<sup>4</sup> Other issues included an invasion of privacy for inmates (however most staff did not feel this was a significant issue); a female's perceived lack of strength and size in potentially volatile situations; and the perceived need by male officers to protect their female counterparts, at least occasionally.<sup>5</sup> Overall, Kissel and Katsampes' evaluation was positive, with the presence of female officers considered an asset to the functioning of the prison.

The aforementioned interview by Rita J. Simon and Judith D. Simon in the US, found male inmates tended to relate to each officer individually, and attempted to play on the officer's weaknesses in the hope of receiving favourable treatment, or being allowed to get away with prohibited acts. Many comments were made by inmates about the interviewee's age and race, as well as questions about her opinion towards black men and her marital status.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, she received several letters containing compliments about her appearance, charm, and friendly nature. The interviewee concluded inmates would 'pull at the strops' or try and 'setup' a new officer, regardless of their gender. Any consideration an inmate gave to liking an officer was secondary to his concern that the officer was willing to protect him and his property.<sup>7</sup>

Once female officers gained the respect of inmates and established their competency, inmates were pleased to have them around in place of a male officer. The difference in treatment of inmates by male and female officers was noted by many inmates. They believed female officers treated them with

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<sup>3</sup> Peter J Kissel and Paul L Katsampes, "The Impact of Women Corrections Officers on the Functioning of Institutions Housing Male Inmates," *Journal of Offender Counseling Services Rehabilitation* 4, no. 3 (1980), 213-14.

<sup>4</sup> Kissel and Katsampes, "The Impact of Women Corrections Officers on the Functioning of Institutions Housing Male Inmates," 228-29.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 230.

<sup>6</sup> Rita J. Simon and Judith D. Simon, "Female Guards in Men's Prisons," in *It's a Crime: Women and Justice*, ed. Roslyn Muraskin and Ted Alleman (New Jersey, US: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 236.

<sup>7</sup> Simon and Simon, "Female Guards in Men's Prisons."

more respect and care and did not need to constantly affirm their power over them. As stated by Boyd et al. in 2005, women should be judged for how well they perform their duties, not how similarly they operate to their male counterparts, as the way in which men fulfil their role may not be the right or best way. For example, whilst men may have the advantage of physical strength, women are able to highlight their value with ‘normalization,’ or their ‘softening’ influence they have on the environment, thereby reducing the likelihood of violent encounters.<sup>8</sup>

In New Zealand, scholars such as Potter (1980), have also argued that female correctional officers not only carry out their jobs proficiently, but they have also added aspects of female skills, interests, and concerns that have markedly improved the general atmosphere of the prison environment.<sup>9</sup> The New Zealand Department of Corrections northern regional commissioner, Jeanette Burns, states that female officers bring a “slightly gentler set of skills” to the role, such as an ability to de-escalate or talk down a situation before it gets out of hand ... At the same time however, you do need the brawn sometimes.”<sup>10</sup> Burns states many inmates in Auckland prison do not respect the women in their own families, but they do respect the authority of women in prison.

The following section examines the positive and negative aspects of employing females within men’s prisons. The introduction of female officers, as seen in the international literature, led to an increased sense of calm among inmates, as well as a respect and care which inmates felt they did not receive from male officers. Female officers also normalised prisons, by demonstrating the appropriate place of women in society. Challenges outlined by the introduction of female officers are also discussed, including sexual harassment from male staff, as well as increase in inappropriate relations between male inmates and staff.

### Positive Impacts of Female Correctional Officers

The introduction of female officers into men’s prisons led to change in the treatment of inmates, as well as to the overall prison environment. Female officers offered a more ‘motherly’ approach to their

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<sup>8</sup> Elizabeth Boyd and Tim Grant, "Is Gender a Factor in Perceived Prison Officer Competence? Male Prisoners' Perceptions in an English Dispersal Prison," *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health* 15, no. 1 (2005), 66.

<sup>9</sup> Potter, "Female Correctional Officers in Male Institutions," *Corrections Magazine* (1980).

<sup>10</sup> Joanne Wane, "Mama's Boys," *North and South*, no 395, (2019), 48-55.

interactions with inmates, whilst normalising the prison environment to better mirror that of society outside of prison. The presence of female officers is said to have also lowered the overall level of aggression in the prison.

### A Motherly Role

The majority of research suggests male inmates respect female correctional officers, with their presence exerting a calming and normalising effect on life in a men's prison. An initiation of sorts for new officers can occur, but usually subsides once they have established their competence and authority.<sup>11</sup> In New Zealand, Lashlie recalled how the inmates were excited to have a female officer; on her first day, Lashlie's fellow officers commented on how they'd never smelt so much aftershave in the wings as they did that day.<sup>12</sup> Mt Eden's first female officer, Linda Brougham, stated "the men prisoners seemed a little shocked" on her first day, but were very respectful and probably toned down their behaviour.<sup>13</sup> She found when she walked into an area, inmates seemed to soften a bit; they used manners, stopped walking around naked, and often commented that it was nice to have some 'normalcy' around the place.<sup>14</sup>

Several female officers noted they gained respect and were treated with kindness by inmates for helping them where they could, such as getting a phone call to a sick family member, or sorting out an altercation. The females interviewed noted many male officers lacked the patience to deal with more trivial matters. Wendy recalled some male officers used these opportunities to play games on inmates, however, she could not see the logic in that. She stated, "if it's possible, they're allowed it, it's within the realms of the institution, then yes I would get it sorted."<sup>15</sup> Kimberley also concluded that "if it was something that I thought was a need," she would look into sorting it for the inmate.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Susan Ehrlich Martin and Nancy C Jurik, *Doing Justice, Doing Gender: Women in Legal and Criminal Justice Occupations* (California, US: Sage, 2007), 178-79.

<sup>12</sup> Celia Lashlie, *The Journey to Prison: Who Goes and Why* (Auckland, New Zealand: Harper Collins, 2002), 47.

<sup>13</sup> *NZH*, 31 October 1986.

<sup>14</sup> Unknown, "Women Corrections Officers Recall Bad Times, Good Times."

<sup>15</sup> Wendy Moreland (retired correctional officer), in discussion with author, October 2019

<sup>16</sup> Kimberley Simpson (retired correctional officer), in discussion with author, September 2019.



In an interview in the current study, Pam believed the positive relationship she had with inmates was similarly built on respect. Inmates knew if they needed help with anything, and it was within Pam's powers to help, she would. She recalled graduates of the Kia Marama sex offender's unit in Christchurch telling new inmates being introduced to the program of her open door policy and that if they had any issues, to go see Pam. However, the graduates also said that if you lied or bullied, Pam would know about it and there would be consequences. Pam recalled doing a board check during recreational time one day and coming upon six inmates drinking home brew. Instead of coming up with an excuse, the inmate who owned the home brew simply said, "fair cop Pam, write us up." Pam loves that story as it highlights exactly how she related with inmates and their understanding of her attitude. Inmates knew that although she would help them if she could, she would never do what she was not supposed to do.<sup>17</sup> Richard who joined the Department of Corrections as an officer in 1996, recalled watching a female officer who had gained the respect of inmates single-handedly, quite happily escorting eight or ten inmates down a corridor to a wing, as male officers watched from afar.<sup>18</sup>

Pasimaca Osment has become known by the name "Mama Pam," not only to the inmates, but other officers, the probation staff, and even the parole board when she is requested at a hearing. Osment distinguishes that in many ways the inmates are like children – some need to be told to wash daily or taught how to make their beds. A high number are illiterate and are encouraged by Osment to study; she also helps them read letters from home. Osment has even acted as a go-between for inmates who have become estranged from their families. Osment's treatment of inmates is what has made her so well-known. She believes the most tender thing within anybody is the feeling of worth. Osment tells inmates she loves them, as some do not know the meaning of love. She says, "here, I'm your mother and I love you very much. And we need to work together as a team to get you out of here."<sup>19</sup>

According to many interviewees, women bring something to the job that many male officers lack; they ask the men how they are, what work was like that day, even what they are reading. Female officers are known for simply offering an ear to listen to inmates' problems, offering advice and

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<sup>17</sup> Pam Boon (retired correctional officer), in discussion with author, October 2019.

<sup>18</sup> Richard Gordon (retired correctional officer), in discussion with author, September 2019.

<sup>19</sup> Wane, "Mama's Boys."

answering questions. Richard described them as a ‘camp mum’ of sorts.<sup>20</sup> They interact with inmates on a different level.<sup>21</sup> Prior to females being employed, inmates only had working out and playing rugby as an outlet for their emotion.<sup>22</sup> Newbold (2005) references a conversation held with a long serving female correctional officer, who said:

Male inmates will talk to a female officer about things that they would never discuss with a male, like they’ll talk about their families and their relationships. They’ll discuss their personal problems. With a male officer, all they’ll talk about is the rugby.<sup>23</sup>

By 1997, this ‘motherly’ role was sought after by the Department of Corrections, as officers were needed to fill vacancies at Arohata women’s prison.<sup>24</sup> A spokeswoman said advertisements were aimed at mothers or women with life skills. The adverts featured a picture of two children arguing in a supermarket and was headlined ‘the toughest training we know.’ The advert stated “...raising a family is no picnic...you’ve sorted out the arguments, made ends meet, got to the bottom of difficult behaviour, developed that gut instinct.”<sup>25</sup> An officer stated that prison officers need to have a high tolerance level, life skills, and be able to communicate. According to the Department of Corrections in 1997, “as far as we’re concerned you’re more qualified for a profession where your experience will earn you the rewards and respect you deserve.”<sup>26</sup>

Female officers also use their skills which they have learnt in their personal lives or previous employment to establish classes and activities for inmates to partake in, such as cooking classes, budgeting classes and a tailor shop.<sup>27</sup> These classes are well patronised as many inmates does not yet possess the skills that are on offer. Some officers also offer more one on one help. Kath recalls meeting with an inmate for a small amount of time each day in Kia Marama, teaching him how to

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<sup>20</sup> Richard Gordon interview.

<sup>21</sup> Heather Smyth (retired correctional officer), in discussion with author, August 2019.

<sup>22</sup> Paul Ballantyne (retired correctional officer), in discussion with author, October 2019.

<sup>23</sup> Greg Newbold, "Women Officers Working in Men's Prisons," *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand/Te Puna Whakaaro*, no. 25 (2005), 6.

<sup>24</sup> *The Evening Post*, 27 May 1997.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Paul Ballantyne interview.

read and write, and chatting to him about different topics. She even managed to get him working again within the prison, a feat she feels quite proud of.<sup>28</sup>

The treatment of inmates by female officers leads to a different type of treatment in return from inmates, compared to male officers. In Crewe's 2006 study in England, one-fifth of inmates interviewed stated relations with female officers were chiefly determined by a 'discourse of chivalry.' Older and married inmates were predominantly likely to regard female officers as worthy of forms of respect and protection that was not necessarily extended to male officers. In the company of female officers (and other female staff), inmates "avoided or apologized for swearing and vulgarity, were less boisterous and more aware of their own physical presence, and behaved in a way that was altogether more mannered than in all-male circumstances."<sup>29</sup> Additionally, some inmates believed it was wrong for female officers to work in men's prisons due to the "hazardous and confrontational nature of the environment, and the persistent sexualization to which female officers were exposed."<sup>30</sup> The inmates commonly presented themselves as 'guardians of female honour,' and claimed to rebuke or apologize for those inmates whom they believed were intrusive and predatory with female officers.

An English study by Elizabeth Boyd and Tim Grant (2005), concludes that not all male officers lack these qualities generally associated with female officers. The study looked at overall competence and professionalism ratings between male and female officers and hypothesised these would not differ. However, it was theorized there would be differences in how men and women were perceived to perform their roles, with women expected to be rated as more communicative, more empathetic, and less disciplining. As hypothesised, there were no significant gender differences in control, communication, or empathy. However, contrary to the hypotheses, there was a significant difference in professionalism; high scores in this section indicated female officers to be more honest, better able to avoid argumentative situations, better able to remain calm in difficult situations, better at getting things done for inmates, being smarter, more presentable, being more respectful to inmate's privacy, and being more polite with inmates. This difference may be due to the concept of professionalism

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<sup>28</sup> Kath Stills (retired correctional officer), in discussion with author, October 2019.

<sup>29</sup> Crewe, "Male Prisoners' Orientations Towards Female Officers in an English Prison," 407.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

involving terms like 'privacy' and 'remaining calm' which may lead to biases in favour of female officers.<sup>31</sup> Overall however, as far as male inmates were concerned, male and female officers were equally capable.<sup>32</sup>

Based on the interviews it is clear that although some female officers are 'tested' by inmates when first employed, they soon gain the respect of inmates through their actions. By offering support and guidance, aiding with family issues, and seeking resolutions for inmates in a timely and respectful manner, many attitudinal beliefs around females in such a role is extinguished.

### 'Normalised' Prison

Most interviewees in the current study discussed how female officers 'normalised' prison and more actively mirrored regular society; a completely male prison was an unnatural environment.<sup>33</sup> Greg Newbold concludes that many inmates are imprisoned as an indirect result of archaic values relating to the inferior status of women, or because of a failure to recognize women's sexual or civil rights.<sup>34</sup> Attributed to these attitudes are crimes such as partner abuse and rape. A vital objective of rehabilitation is to change the anti-social values. Exposing men to a situation in which women are presented as authoritative role models is an essential part of the reform process. Imprisoning men with minimal contact to women, in an environment where attitudes remain unchallenged, further hinders any progress.<sup>35</sup>

The relationship between male inmates and female officers is particularly interesting because, in terms of gender, it represents an inversion of conventional power relations, where men tend to be dominant, and women subordinate. That this relationship is based on formal roles and responsibilities distinguished female officers all the more from the kinds of personal ties with women that most male inmates have in the outside community. In a 1985 study by Peter Horne, some inmates argued the presence of female officers made the artificial world of prison seem more like the outside world.

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<sup>31</sup> Boyd and Grant, "Is Gender a Factor in Perceived Prison Officer Competence?" 72.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>33</sup> Les Hine (retired correctional officer), in discussion with author, November 2019.

<sup>34</sup> Newbold, "Women Officers Working in Men's Prisons," 8.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 9; Les Hine interview.

However, this was precisely why other inmates objected to their presence: inmates did not want to be “reminded of their sexual deprivation” and many felt frustration because they could “look but not touch.”<sup>36</sup>

Female officers also have the opportunity to offer inmates a positive image of women. If male offenders are required to interact with women in positions of authority, this may encourage them to develop more positive attitudes towards females.<sup>37</sup> When interviewed in the current study, all interviewees believed this concept of normalising society was paramount. Wendy believes her presence in prison taught inmates to not see women as a tool; women are not simply pieces of meat, or to only speak when spoken to.<sup>38</sup> Inmates have to face their issues with females, and learn to deal with and accept their place in society. This notion was not always wholly accepted, as Kimberley recounts one inmate who would not allow women in his cell. Kimberley decided she could be pedantic and force it, but she did not see the point. Even without entering into his cell, the inmate still had to accept that females were there. For many inmates, dealing with female officers is the only positive female contact they have had in their often violent lives. The Department of Corrections outlines how having female officers in men’s prisons provides inmates with positive female role models, and helps diffuse the macho culture that can build up.

In her interview, Pam recalled a particular inmate at Kia Marama Sex Offenders Unit, who she felt she really impacted on. The inmate had grown up in a very abusive household in the Pacific Islands, and often witnessed his sisters and mother being beaten by their father, of whom he was also a victim. As Pam recalled, the inmate’s attitude when he entered the treatment facility was that his ‘bros’ were first, then his dogs and his cars and so forth, and way down below were women, which you could kick and beat up. Through several sessions with the inmate discussing general topics, to the inmate recounting his childhood, Pam was able to show the inmate that women deserve respect. A highlight in her career was when the inmate said to her, “I have the upmost respect for you as a person,” before continuing on to say, “It never occurred to me, you know, that I could have respect for a woman until

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<sup>36</sup> Peter Horne, "Female Correction Officer-A Status Report," *Federal Probation* 49 (1985), 50.

<sup>37</sup> Cheeseman and Worley, "Women on the Wing," 88.

<sup>38</sup> Wendy Moreland interview.

it occurred to me that you were a woman.”<sup>39</sup> She felt privileged for knowing that she had had such an impact.<sup>40</sup>

In interviews conducted in New Zealand by Patricia Sarr (1995), both male officers and inmates stressed the positive difference female officers made on the prison system.<sup>41</sup> Although not many inmates made specific comments about the presence of female officers in prison, of those that were made, only one was slightly negative, in that the inmate was worried about safety of the female staff. Many inmates noted that most would still uphold respect for a woman. Many considered hitting a female as a lack of respect. Despite the emotional and attitudinal change brought about by women entering into prisons, female officers have still been attacked and assaulted like male officers, although not as often; systematic studies report lower rates of assaults against female correctional officers when compared to male officers.<sup>42</sup>

### Aggression Levels Lowered

This respect for female officers is indicative of a common theme from the interviews: how the presence of female officers was often advantageous in heated situations. In most instances, women were able to minimise altercations and ‘talk down’ inmates better than their male counterparts.<sup>43</sup>

Richard recounted when he and other officers were escorting an inmate between areas, the inmate’s handcuffs seized and were unable to be removed. The handcuffs had to be ground off, during which time the inmate became quite irate. After the incident, the inmate commented that the female officer talked to him during the event calmed him down. He admitted that once the handcuffs were off, he had intended to assault the officers, but the influence of the female officer helped him remain calm.<sup>44</sup>

However, female officers could at times unintentionally set an inmate off simply by being present,

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<sup>39</sup> Pam Boon interview.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Sarr, “Corrections: Recent Attempts at Workplace Reform and Managing Changing in New Zealand Prisons.” A Thesis Submitted to the Victoria University of Wellington in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Public Policy. (Wellington, New Zealand: University of Wellington, 1995), 105.

<sup>42</sup> Martin and Jurik, *Doing Justice, Doing Gender*, 179.

<sup>43</sup> Richard Gordon interview.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

such as those in the At Risk units who may have issues with females.<sup>45</sup> Dorreen remarked that it did not take male officers long to realise that women could defuse a potentially volatile situation just by walking into a room. She thought almost every male officer you spoke to at that time would say that they would not work without women in a prison.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, women were talkative, and inmates often talked to them more easily.

On a more general level, all interviewees in the current study noted that female officers lowered the overall level of aggression in prisons. In a 1996 article in *Te Maori*, Audrey Koti, an officer at Mangaroa prison in the Hawkes Bay, believed that being female, as well as Māori, had its benefits. Koti felt it gave her the opportunity to deal innovatively with inmates, recognizing the importance of communication skills, which were enhanced by being female. Koti believed her gender offered a more “calming influence for inmates.”<sup>47</sup> Supporters of female correctional officers have suggested they have a calming and normalising effect on men’s prisons. Moreover, women may inspire work structures which are less hierarchical, more consensual, and more accommodating to the family.<sup>48</sup>

Brian found having female officers toned down the high level of volatility in prison, as inmates were aware that “we’ve got a lady in here.”<sup>49</sup> Many interviewees recalled instances where inmates had even gone out of their way to protect a female officer in danger of being harmed by other inmates.<sup>50</sup> Heather was once threatened in the kitchen by an inmate on drugs, and recalled three or four inmates having her back and telling the inmate to leave her alone.<sup>51</sup> Pam also recalled an interaction she had with an inmate who swore at her for not opening his cell up quick enough after lunch one day. She took the conversation in her stride and was not offended by the altercation, however, before she finished her shift, the inmate approached Pam and apologised for his earlier behaviour, stating he had had a bad phone call before lunch, but that did not give him the right to yell at her. Later on, when

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<sup>45</sup> Nellie (retired correctional officer), in discussion with author, September 2019.

<sup>46</sup> Nellie Interview.

<sup>47</sup> *Te Maori*. Vol 5, no. 9. June 1996.

<sup>48</sup> Martin and Jurik, *Doing Justice, Doing Gender*, 216.

<sup>49</sup> Brian Hatrill (retired correctional officer), in discussion with author, October 2019.

<sup>50</sup> Richard Gordon interview; Heather Smyth (retired correctional officer), in discussion with author, August 2019; Nellie interview.

<sup>51</sup> Heather Smyth interview.

Pam was escorting inmates back to the same block from kitchen duty, they asked if the inmate had apologised properly, which was when it became apparent to Pam that other inmates had witnessed the altercation and confronted the inmate on his behaviour.<sup>52</sup> Osment recalled when she was punched in the face by an inmate – the only time she was ever assaulted – other inmates in his unit had to be warned against taking retribution on her behalf.<sup>53</sup>

Interviewees in Crewe's 2006 study in England concluded that it was unacceptable to hit women, or talk to them disrespectfully, regardless of a woman's behaviour, unless they were severely incited. In comparison, it was generally assumed that male officers were able to 'look after themselves.'

However, the relationship between male officers and inmates was not so antagonistic that inmates felt unable to defend male officers against other inmates. Although sympathy for female officers was generally founded on their femininity, Crewe concluded that sympathy for officers was not exclusive to women.<sup>54</sup>

### Challenges with Employing Female Correctional Officers in Men's Prisons

The introduction of female officers raises challenges for staff, inmates, and those at a managerial and administrative level. Such issues include alterations needed to improve privacy for male inmates in order to adhere to the inmate's rights, the appearance of sexual harassment cases between female officers and male staff and management, and also the potential for inappropriate relationships between female staff and male inmates.

#### Privacy

The employment of female officers has led to the need for alterations around men's prisons throughout New Zealand, mostly in regard to inmate privacy. Shower doors have been installed, as well as stalls for toilets. At Wi Tako prison when Lashlie began work, shower curtains were installed, but within hours the inmates had cut a series of holes in them at groin level. When a second set of curtains were installed, new holes were cut by inmates, leading prison management to return things to

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<sup>52</sup> Pam Boon interview.

<sup>53</sup> Wane, "Mama's Boys."

<sup>54</sup> Crewe, "Male Prisoners' Orientations Towards Female Officers in an English Prison," 408.



how they were, as it was obvious the inmates didn't appear too alarmed at the idea that Lashlie would see them naked.<sup>55</sup> Lashlie decided she would call out as she entered the bathrooms, to allow those who did want some privacy to cover up. In many ways, the issue of how Lashlie handled the nudity and shower situation was the rite of passage for acceptance as a female officer in a men's prison.<sup>56</sup>

Other privacy issues were not so easily remedied. For instance, in order to complete a muster or any observations, a 'spyhole' was often used, in which an officer looks into an inmate's cell and sight them, often without the inmate's knowledge. If female officers were to complete this task, there would be the potential for an inmate to be seen in a compromising position, such as undressing.<sup>57</sup> Lashlie knew it was necessary for her to check bathrooms during a muster check as if the inmates knew the bathrooms were 'no-go' areas for female officers, these areas would immediately be used for any drug use, or to conduct any other 'business.'<sup>58</sup>

### Effect on Inmates

Inmates who felt they had developed friendly relations with female officers were affronted when those officers exerted formal authority. In his English study, Crewe (2006) revealed a recurrent implication that the 'personal relationship' generally sought from female officers was "incompatible and inconsistent with their deployment of power."<sup>59</sup> This inference was conveyed in the common description of female officers as 'two-faced' – a term normally used in the context of interpersonal rather than institutional relations, and not used in regard to male officers. Relationships with non-uniformed female staff, such as teachers and drug workers, were less intense than those with female officers, due to the lower level of power these groups held. Overall, some inmates were troubled by an emotional contradiction of desiring female officers whilst resenting their actions and authority. Therefore, female officers who were perceived as unprofessional or disrespectful risked 'double stigmatization:' being censured sexually as well as professionally. For example, in Crewe's study,

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<sup>55</sup> Lashlie, *The Journey to Prison*, 49.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Les Hine interview.

<sup>58</sup> Lashlie, *The Journey to Prison*, 48.

<sup>59</sup> Crewe, "Male prisoners' Orientations Towards Female Officers in an English Prison," 412.

criticisms of one female officer frequently jumped from her work practices to her supposed promiscuity.<sup>60</sup>

Crewe summarised the study by stating that although assumptions about the calming influence of female officers seemed accurate at the collective level, the presence of female authority figures also had a provocative impact on the sexual and emotional state of some individual inmates. This was rarely the fault of officers themselves; some female officers did use sexuality as a management tool, or were less careful than they should have been about ensuring that their behaviour was unambiguously professional. Crewe found, in contradiction to other studies, most female officers sought to downplay the role of gender and sexuality at work, preferring to be judged according to the same criteria as male officers.<sup>61</sup>

Although some interviewees recalled acts of a sexual nature being witnessed through men's prisons, such as inmates masturbating in their cells when the nightly count was being completed by a female officer, none stated that the presence of female officers seemed provocative to the inmates. However, there were non-sexual instances where the presence of a female officer was not productive and the females were not naïve to the possibility of female officers 'setting people off,' in certain situations. This was why officers such as Nellie believed it paramount to have both male and female officers within a prison, as both offer skills the other may lack. She recalled her biggest challenge was her time in a sex offenders' unit, where she again took on the role of acting manager. She had trouble with some inmates who, in line with the nature of their offending, preyed on vulnerable people, of which these inmates classed females. She also recalled an Egyptian inmate who she believed was going to assault her, simply because it was against his culture to talk to any females, let alone have a female in authority.

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 412-413.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 414.

## Sexual Harassment

By 1990, although women continued to excel in the workforce, with small but vital advancements towards equality, other issues began to emerge, such as sexual harassment. A New Zealand Department of Justice information brochure from 1990 defined sexual harassment as “unsolicited verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature by a person or group.”<sup>62</sup> The harassment must be perceived by the victim to be unwelcome or offensive, and persistent to an extent to have a detrimental effect on the individual’s employment, job performance, or opportunities. Sexual harassment included, but was not limited to personally offensive verbal comments, sexual or smutty jokes, offensive hand or body gestures, offering benefits in return of sex, and leering (suggestive staring) at a person’s body.<sup>63</sup> Sexual harassment was witnessed from fellow officers in various ranks, as well as some in managerial positions.

Specific achievements during 1990-91 included the development and promulgation of policy and procedures relating to sexual harassment, the initiation of a major sexual harassment awareness training program due for completion by December 1991 and the integration of female prison officers into the Auckland maximum security prison.<sup>64</sup> The objective of the training was that, once completed, participants would know the nature of sexual harassment, its implications in the workplace, the manager’s responsibility in maintaining a safe work environment; departmental policy on sexual harassment, and procedures to follow when sexual harassment occurs. The groups targeted for training included managers responsible for staff, and sexual harassment contact groups.<sup>65</sup>

Alongside the *Human Rights Commission Act 1977*, sexual harassment was unlawful under sections 210, 212, 221 and 222 of the *Labour Relations Act 1987* which outlines the personal grievance procedure which a complainant may take up, and how she may go through to the Labour Court for

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<sup>62</sup> Department of Justice, “Sexual Harassment,” (Wellington, New Zealand: Government Printer, 1990), n.p.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Department of Justice, “Report of the Department of Justice: Year Ended 30<sup>th</sup> June 1991,” *AJHR*, 1991-93, E-5, 101.

<sup>65</sup> Department of Justice, “Sexual Harassment.”

resolution and section 56, 2a of the *State Sector Act 1988*, under which managers are required to provide “good and safe working conditions” for their employees.<sup>66</sup>

The issue of harassment is prominent within international literature. In the US in 2003, Victor Savicki, Eric Cooley, and Jennifer Gjesvold examined harassment as a predictor of job burnout and stress for correctional officers. The hypotheses, based on earlier literature, were that female officers would experience more harassment than male officers, and that harassment would add to the predicted burnout, organisational commitment, and experience of stress, which would not be found with male officers.<sup>67</sup> 144 correctional officers and 45 supervisors from four facilities completed the anonymous research measures, such as a harassment scale and an organisational commitment questionnaire.

The results supported the hypotheses. Although a detailed sexual harassment measure was not used, it was clear that harassment was much higher for female officers than male officers.<sup>68</sup> Harassment played a greater role for women in the experience of burnout, was a significant contributor to levels of perceived stress, and was influential in reducing structural commitment and increasing intentions to leave.<sup>69</sup> However, Savicki et al. outlined that female officers had found a way to survive the hostile conditions and preserve their capabilities on the ‘socioeconomic level or interpersonal relationships’ as seen in previous literature. An examination of their coping methods may be beneficial for combating harassment.<sup>70</sup>

The intent of the male officers can arguably be questioned. According to Feinman (1994), some men believe that if a woman wanted to work in a men’s facility, she was sexually permissive and therefore an easy target for comments or behaviour of a sexual nature. However, when interviewed for this study, Kimberley highlighted that some of the treatment she received from her male counterparts was not considered harassment in their eyes. She recalled a male officer questioning how she was harassed, and his shock at the different examples she listed. She said, “none of that would be accepted

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Victor Savicki, Eric Cooley, and Jennifer Gjesvold, "Harassment as a Predictor of Job Burnout in Correctional Officers," *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 30, no. 5 (2003), 607.

<sup>68</sup> Savicki, Cooley, and Gjesvold, "Harassment as a Predictor of Job Burnout in Correctional Officers," 614.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 617.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 616.

in a normal workplace, but I accept it here every day.”<sup>71</sup> She also used the example of a fellow officer laying down in front of the doorway, so she had to step over him to leave. The intention of the officer was to jokingly get a look up her skirt as she went over him. Other instances of sexual harassment in New Zealand include the aforementioned inquiry in 1991 into the treatment of a female officer at Invercargill prison.

### Inappropriate Relationships with Inmates

Despite their positive impact on inmates and the prison environment, female officers, as with male officers, have been reprimanded for breaching their Code of Conduct which prevents officers forming close ties with inmates, including financial or sexual relationships.<sup>72</sup> One cause for these types of relations was the isolation and subsequent lack of support for some female officers by their colleagues, which led to female officers being drawn into friendships with, and ‘groomed’ by, manipulative male inmates.<sup>73</sup> The grooming often begins softly, with comments like ‘you look nice, miss’ and ‘have you got a tissue or a light?’ However, these can escalate to requests for drugs, weapons, or even sexual favours.<sup>74</sup> Kath felt the cause for some officers to be involved in these inappropriate relationships was that they did not keep a strict professional appearance with inmates; they would often share personal details about their lives, such as who was in their family, where they were from, and where they were going on holiday.<sup>75</sup>

Each interviewee acknowledged the presence of inappropriate relationships within men’s prisons, but none considered these to be rife. Many remarked on the charm and skill of inmates in trapping and isolating female officers and leading them into compromising relationships.<sup>76</sup> It often started with simple things, like helping an officer complete her muster check by locating inmates.<sup>77</sup> Kimberley, as part of her role in the Women’s Network, used to talk to new female staff during their initial training, and reminded them to think about the motive behind their actions; for example, “when you’re getting

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<sup>71</sup> Kimberley Simpson interview.

<sup>72</sup> *The Press*, 13 May 2000.

<sup>73</sup> Newbold, "Women Officers Working in Men's Prisons," 6.

<sup>74</sup> *The Press*, 18 March 2006.

<sup>75</sup> Kath Stills interview.

<sup>76</sup> Wendy Moreland interview; Kimberley Simpson interview.

<sup>77</sup> Kimberley Simpson interview.

dressed, ready to come to work, and you brush your hair, are you thinking will he notice I've changed my hair?"<sup>78</sup> Once officers have reached this stage they are considered 'got' and need to seek help. The relationships were not always isolated to female officers, but the relations between inmates and male officers were usually not of a sexual nature.<sup>79</sup> Due to allegations, correctional officer Vernonia Mason stated that contact is now under scrutiny as all women are 'feeling the heat.' "We are portrayed as desperate women," Mason claimed, "who are coming in here looking for a relationship, and it's not that – it's a career."<sup>80</sup>

Various instances have occurred in which female officers have failed to comply with their occupational Code of Conduct. These women could be single, separated, or even in relationships, but "all of a sudden, they get to a position where they've got men craving for female company."<sup>81</sup> Although it does impact on prison morale and hinders the idea that women have a place in men's prisons, Richard believed most people moved on fairly quickly.<sup>82</sup> These relationships were often raised with management. In some cases, the officer or the inmate involved was moved, but in other instances, nothing was done. Richard noted that the introduction of female officers was a 'pet' thing for the Department of Corrections and therefore, the department did not want to highlight any incidences that could create bad publicity.<sup>83</sup> Many interviewees found the subject hard to broach with management, or to seek a resolution to, as you had to have solid evidence which, once gained, was often too late.

Throughout the late 20th century, several incidences of misconduct involving female officers occurred. In mid-1989 to mid-1990 four female officers resigned after falling in love with inmates (two of whom were serving life sentences for murder). In the 1990s and onwards, publicity around inappropriate relations was sporadic, with most cases shielded by the quiet resignation of officers

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> *Waikato Times*, 22 May 2004.

<sup>81</sup> Wendy Moreland interview.

<sup>82</sup> Richard Gordon interview.

<sup>83</sup> David Shelton (retired correctional officer), in discussion with author, August 2019.

involved.<sup>84</sup> Minister of Corrections Paul Swain admitted to the media that since December 1999, 17 female and four male officers had been investigated for inappropriate relations with inmates; two had been dismissed, eight had resigned, eight cases had not been proven, and one was still being investigated.<sup>85</sup> The beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century saw a leap in cases, with the Corrections Association admitting to the knowledge of at least five female officers who had resigned or been dismissed in the two years prior, due to inappropriate relations with male inmates.<sup>86</sup>

Despite measures put in place to combat this type of behaviour, incidents continued to arise. In 2000, *The Press* reported two female correctional officers from Christchurch men's prison resigned after allegations that letters were being exchanged with a male inmate.<sup>87</sup> In 2004, two female officers were fired for smuggling contraband to their gang-member lovers, a female officer was fired for criminal fraud, and an inmate in Waikeria prison fathered a child to a female officer. In 2006, it was reported in *The Press* that a female correctional officer in Christchurch had been accused of an inappropriate relationship with an inmate.<sup>88</sup> In 2018, eleven officers faced such allegations, six of whom were women. Of those eleven, the article says three were disciplined. The officers' union, the Corrections Association of New Zealand, said staff were not adequately trained in resisting pressures from inmates. The association president, Beven Hanlon, stated when you first enter the training, the department give out a pamphlet and one and a half hours on the topic out of a six-week course, and that was it. Therefore, a lot of officers come out of it a "bit naïve."<sup>89</sup>

Long hours in difficult, overcrowded conditions, manipulative inmates and an 'emotionally low ebb' have been cited as causes behind intimate relationships with inmates. Theresa Manual, who had worked at Hawke's Bay regional prison since 2003, was convicted in court in January 2005 for supplying clothes to an inmate and allowing him to take pictures of them with a disposable camera.

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<sup>84</sup> Newbold, "Women Officers Working in Men's Prisons," 6.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *The Press*, 13 May 2000.

<sup>88</sup> *The Press*, 28 Jan 2006.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

She also made several unauthorised phone calls to the inmate's cell phone, claiming they were to a suicidal daughter.<sup>90</sup>

In June 2003, a personality-based test, known as the Hogan Assessment Tool, was introduced into the hiring procedures in an attempt to screen out job applicants who might be more susceptible to inappropriate relations with inmates.<sup>91</sup> If their application was accepted, new officers completed a one week induction program, followed by a six week Initial Training Course (ITC), before completing another round of induction. During this time, the new officers were taken through the Code of Conduct, which outlined the Department's expectations, provided examples of serious misconduct, and the penalties for these. Staff were also given comprehensive instructions on how to build and maintain professional relationships with inmates, and how to avoid being compromised.<sup>92</sup>

Establishing friendly relations between staff and inmates makes managing a prison easier, so long as the fine line between friendly relations and inappropriate relations is not crossed. The downside to this administrative method is the increased risk of romantic relations occurring.<sup>93</sup>

In March 2006, an article in *The Press* detailed a female officer who was caught smuggling pornographic videos into Christchurch men's prison. The source said a long-term inmate had been 'grooming' the officer for some time, and she had been bringing food in for the inmate. Also in *The Press* in the same year, another article detailed a Christchurch officer who was fired for giving bacon to an inmate and bringing her own videos to watch whilst on nightshift. The officer claimed prison staff regularly bartered with inmates for favours and did not mention any notion of naivety.<sup>94</sup> She commented there was widespread abuse of the system occurring, and she had simply played a small part. Senior officers commonly brought in food for inmates; one officer brought in a Christmas cake

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<sup>90</sup> *Dominion Post*, 14 January 2005.

<sup>91</sup> Newbold, "Women Officers Working in Men's Prisons," 7.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> *The Press*, 23 November 2006.



made by his wife. The officer stated she was told “this is what happens when you are on the floor. When there’s two of us and 60 of them, do whatever to keep them happy.”<sup>95</sup>

According to interviews in a 2004 *Waikato Times* article, working in a men’s prison creates particular difficulties for female officers; difficulties that do not seem to be fully appreciated by their male counterparts, or understood by senior staff. Questions need to be raised about preventing these relationships occurring; how can a woman be sure her concerns will be treated sympathetically? However, not all are convinced of the positive impact that female officers have had in men’s prisons, and do not see the necessity of offering this support. New Zealand First MP Ron Mark claimed that the problem of female officers entering into intimate relationships with male inmates can be solved by banning women from working in a men’s prison.<sup>96</sup> The article highlighted how this ‘blinkered attitude’ could severely restrict a woman from making a significant career advancement within corrections. Additionally, restricting a person’s choice of employment on the grounds of gender is something women have been fighting for years.

Pam highlighted how the involvement of female officers with an inmate was always a big deal; the media got involved, it was on the news, and rumours were rife throughout prison. However, male officers who were inappropriately involved with female inmates did not receive the same attention. Pam remembered working in the receiving office when a female inmate was unexpectedly transferred from another facility. The inmate had been having an affair with a male officer and was subsequently relocated; however, the male officer retained his job. In Pam’s opinion, the treatment of inappropriate relationships between male and female officers was poles apart.<sup>97</sup>

### Personality Type as Opposed to Gender

Whilst it is clear that there are both positive and negative implications for employing female officers in men’s prisons, one reoccurring theme throughout the interviews was that it was the personality type of an individual, and not simply their gender, which made them a good officer. In other words,

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> *Waikato Times*, 11 May 2004.

<sup>97</sup> Pam Boom interview.

although women bring to the role some positive aspects, not all women, as with men, are suited for the job. Several interviewees highlighted how certain females were employed but soon resigned as they realised what was actually involved in the role. As Brian stated, it is not until you actually get into that situation, and are left on your own with the responsibility of guarding dangerous men, then it becomes real.<sup>98</sup> Women should not be hired just because they are female, in an attempt to redress the issue of balance in their employment. They have to be suited for the job, and have to hold certain traits.<sup>99</sup>

Traits considered important for the job include common sense, honesty, imagination, and initiative.<sup>100</sup> One group of women who began work in the prison where Dave worked, were in his opinion completely unsuitable for the job. Dave, who joined the prison service in 1974, believe that the women had the wrong attitude, and were at times, even dangerous, as male officers often felt they needed to look out for them, creating a lot of tension. This issue was not restricted solely to females, as many males who were hired did not have the right personality for the job either.<sup>101</sup> Nellie believed that being a good officer involves “not seeing all the prisoners as all bad, or can’t be rehabilitated.” Nellie retells how she worked with “what some would call the worst of the worst,” but, as she states, “they’re still people at the end of the day.”

Former prison Superintendent Les Hine was open to the idea of hiring female officers, but had his own views on the right type of female to take the role. Hine stated, “you don’t want some soft-hearted person, you want someone who can be fair and firm when necessary.” However, at the other extreme, some officers seemed to have the opinion that you had to be a macho type in order to be a good officer, which was also not the case. Hine believed female officers needed to be feminine, whilst having the ability to deal with inmates and gain respect through their attitude and the way they approached matters.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Brian Hatrill interview.

<sup>99</sup> Pam Boom interview.

<sup>100</sup> Paul Ballantyne interview.

<sup>101</sup> David Shelton interview.

<sup>102</sup> Les Hine interview.

Several of those interviewed by in the current study also found age to be a key factor in how women handled the role and were treated, as many of the older female officers were treated with respect by inmates.<sup>103</sup> Heather believed this may be because many older women had more experience interacting with males. She also found younger women tended to get a harder time from inmates. Pam felt women seeking employment as correctional officers needed to be at least in their late twenties to be able to handle such a role. She also believed that being a mother was an advantage, as she found the role required the same skills as being a parent; “you’ve got to be consistent, say what you mean, mean what you say, you have to do what you say you’re gonna do.”<sup>104</sup> As she was a mother when she joined, she felt the role came quite naturally to her.

The focus on job capacity rather than gender has been examined internationally, where it is often hypothesised that male correctional officers’ actions would still support masculine beliefs about defining and responding to a conflict situation, whilst women’s actions also would conform to assumptions about their capabilities. Certain study design factors may account for the lack of gender differences observed in studies. For example, in Boyd et al.’s 2005 study in the United Kingdom, inmates’ feedback reported difficulties in rating officers according to gender, believing behaviour was more determined by individual characteristics. In retrospect, Boyd argued it would have been beneficial to ask respondents to have rated individual officers and then analysed the data according to gender.<sup>105</sup>

In a study in the US, Hogan et al. (2005), used a realistic vignette of an inmate disobeying a direct order in interviews with 192 officers at a large southwestern jail. The study sought to address whether similarities or differences existed between male and female correctional officers in their definition of a conflict situation, and their chosen response in solving said conflict. One dominant variable of an officer’s definition of and response to conflict may be the gender of the inmate, with most literature

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<sup>103</sup> Richard Gordon interview; Heather Smyth interview.

<sup>104</sup> Pam Boom interview.

<sup>105</sup> Boyd and Grant, "Is Gender a Factor in Perceived Prison Officer Competence?" 72-73.

focused on female officers' effectiveness in men's prisons.<sup>106</sup> Results indicates male and female officers reacted to conflict in a similar manner. The inmate's gender however, appears to be a prominent factor in the officer's decision on how to react.<sup>107</sup> Some officers choose to call for assistance immediately rather than trying to resolve the situation, but this choice is similar for both genders.<sup>108</sup> When confronted with noncompliant male inmates, very few female officers rely solely on themselves to resolve the situation. Overall, it seems safety issues, rather than gender differences, shape officers' decisions. These results challenged the literature that bases assumptions on gender rather than ability; specifically, it contradicts the myth that men and women use different techniques to define and respond to conflict.

Hogan et al.'s study subsequently provided the initial support needed in encouraging corrections administrators to cease basing some responsibilities on an officer's gender.<sup>109</sup> A 1996 article by Denise Jenne and Robert Kersting also found female and male officers responded in a similar manner to aggression from male inmates. The study gave a preliminary look at the strategies used by female officers when responding to volatile male inmates. Female officers responded more aggressively than their male counterparts in particular situations, making concerns that female officers would not be able to handle situations requiring an aggressive response, seem somewhat unwarranted.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Nancy L Hogan, Eric B Lambert and John H Hepburn, "Is There a Difference? Exploring Male and Female Correctional Officers' Definition of and Response to Conflict Situations," *Women & Criminal Justice* 15, no. 3-4 (2005), 146.

<sup>107</sup> Hogan et al., "Is There a Difference?" 143-44.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 157-58.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 161.

<sup>110</sup> Denise L Jenne and Robert C Kersting, "Aggression and Women Correctional Officers in Male Prisons," *The Prison Journal* 76, no. 4 (1996), 458.

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## Conclusion

The influence of the feminist movements in Western countries in the 1960s, specially the US, led to widespread transformations for women in New Zealand and other nations by the 1970s. Women in New Zealand began to push for change to their current position in society in relation to men, and their duty in home making and child rearing. Women began to enter the workforce in increasing numbers, take a place within Parliament, and establish themselves on an equal footing to men in regard to pay. In 1985, the Ministry of Women's Affairs was established to further ensure the progress of equality or women in the workforce.

The first female officer employed in a men's prison in New Zealand was 1985, when Celia Lashlie began work at Wi Tako prison. Throughout the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the number of female officers within men's prisons increased, and both positive aspects and challenges surrounding their employment emerged. Although issues were faced with the introduction of female guards in New Zealand, these were minor in comparison to the US, where several cases of discrimination were brought before the courts. As outlined in international literature, the main reason females were not hired within men's prisons prior to this, and why so much resistance was faced by females when they were eventually hired, were concerns around safety and security. A perceived lack of strength left them vulnerable to assault and unable to provide adequate back up for male colleagues when needed.

Data from Public Services Lists in the New Zealand Archives from 1980 to 1987 show the number of female officers remained relatively stable from 1980 until 1987, when a dramatic increase in this role was recorded. The percentage of females in certain rankings, and the number of prisons employing female officers also increased throughout this period. These increases from 1987 coincide with the push for equal employment, as in 1985, female officers began to be employed in men's prisons. Prior to this, female officers were only able to seek employment in women's prisons. The increase of

female officers in the latter half of the 1980s also saw an increase in rankings of female officers, with an increase in females with the role of second officer and third officer, as female officers were more successful in gaining promotion in men's prisons compared with the previous decades.

In 1980, only four prisons employed female officers, but by 1988, the number of prisons that employed female officers had increased to 16 correctional facilities around New Zealand, including Wi Tako prison, Dunedin prison, and Rolleston prison. By this stage, all men's prisons employed females, except Auckland's maximum security prison at Paremoremo. Legislation was passed regarding females entering into men's prisons, with *The Working Party for the Integration of the New Zealand Prison Service* released in 1985, outlining the necessary changes needed for the full integration of the prison service.

As concluded in Farnworth (1992), interviewees highlighted the entrenched stereotype of prisons being male dominated, a view which was especially pertinent with older male officers and/or those who had been employed for a fair length of time. As concluded in Belknap (1991) and Zimmer (1986), information gained from the interviews found that most females were unaware of what the role entailed when they were first employed. Most did not aspire to be correctional officers, but took up the role as the salary was good. Many were shocked at the environment of prison, and also the attitude of male officers, not only toward the inmates, but towards them as fellow colleagues.

Several interviewees, as seen in international literature, faced resistance from male staff and management as it was believed that women did not belong, and could not handle the job. Resistance to the employment of female officers was especially apparent in Auckland's maximum security prison, where it was only through government legislation that females were able to begin work. As in other facilities, male staff at the maximum security prison felt it was unsafe for females to be employed, and felt personally responsible for their safety. Whilst the resistance from male officers to work alongside female officers has been examined predominantly in regard to the job model by Jurik and Halemba (1994) and again by Jurik (1995), as opposed to the gender model, this thesis supported the findings of Belknap (1988), that both the job and gender models are present; the entrenched organisational attitudes of prisons within New Zealand, alongside the attitudes of officers in relation

to their work intertwined and led to levels of resistance for female officers. As outlined by Sarr (1995), not all female officers felt they had the support of male officers in conflict situations.

Certain females interviewed found that although they did not experience any harassment by male staff in managerial positions, they were not treated in equal standing with male staff especially in regard to promotion. Many felt they were overlooked regarding promotional opportunities, with some even seeking employment at other prisons in the hope of being treated fairly. On occasion, resistance faced by female officers from male colleagues evolved into harassment, and even sexual harassment for some female staff. This was outlined in the 1991 inquiry into Invercargill prison where a female officer had been exposed to unproven sexual accusations, received offensive phone calls from male colleagues, and had her property tampered with.

In conclusion and in support of the overall themes throughout the international literature examined, the presence of female officers has been overwhelmingly positive. Lewd comments and gestures were experienced at the beginning, however, male inmates soon became accustomed to females working in prisons. The findings of this study detailed the ‘motherly’ affect female officers bring to the role, with an increase in the level of respect and kindness felt by inmates. A rapport was commonly built between female officers and inmates based on respect. Inmates came to understand that female officers were more likely to help them with any difficulties they were having or issues they faced, resulting in kindness towards female officers from inmates. Some inmates even protected female officers from other inmates at times when they were in anger, outlining the respect held for these women. In return, as concluded in Crewe (2006), certain inmates looked out for female officers and provided protection for them from other inmates who did not treat the officers with respect. Many inmates were more likely and more able to talk to female staff about personal issues and seek guidance and support. Female officers were also able to offer their skills by holding classes for the inmates, including cooking and budgeting classes.

The findings also found the overall calming and normalising effect female officers had on everyday life within men’s prisons: inmates’ manners and hygiene improved, their communication skills were developed, and many also learnt how to properly treat women, as concluded by Horne (1985). The

overall atmosphere of men's prisons throughout New Zealand, became more 'normalised' with females being present. The presence of female officers further assisted in rehabilitative efforts through disproving the antisocial values held by some inmates in prison, and entrenching the idea of females in an authoritative role; the inmates had to accept women's evolved place in society. Imprisoning males with minimal contact to women hinders any further progress for that inmate, especially if these attitudes remain unchallenged whilst the inmate is incarcerated. The overall level of aggression was found to be lower with women present, as noted by all interviewees. Several instances were discussed by interviewees in which the presence of a female officer had stopped a potentially volatile situation from occurring. The general atmosphere of the prison was also found to be calmer and less volatile with women present.

As expected, the introduction of female officers within men's prisons was not without issue. Concerns around privacy, extensively seen through complaint cases in the US regarding unfair treatment by employers, were also witnessed to a lesser extent in New Zealand. Whilst most inmates adapted to the changes in privacy, some opportunists harassed female staff by masturbating or appearing nude when nightly checks were being completed. The introduction of female officers also led to incidences of inappropriate relations between staff and inmates, as had already been seen with male correctional officers and both male and female inmates. These were acknowledged by the interviewees, alongside the skill and charm of male inmates in isolating and trapping female officers, leading them into such relations. Many noted that these relationships often began with simple compliments and requests from male inmates, which left female officers being drawn in, or 'groomed' as it was often referred to. Several articles within various New Zealand newspapers detailed accounts of such relations during the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s.

As concluded by Boyd et al. (2005), this thesis found that it was the personality type of the officer, not specifically the gender, that made them successful as an officer; a concept which had been examined within international literature. Therefore, women should not be employed simply because of their sex; although women can bring to the role some positive aspects, not all women, as with men, are suited for the job. Whilst it is difficult to measure the success of the integration of female officers



into the Department of Corrections, as outlined in the research and analyses above, this thesis aimed to show the positive aspects that females bring to the role, outweigh the negatives. The overall theme from the interviews conducted and international literature concluded that female officers in their role within men's prisons had a positive impact on inmates, other staff, and the prison environment as a whole. Women will continue to play a major role in men's prisons throughout New Zealand, and around the world. As older inmates who were not exposed to female officers leave the prison system, and offenders who have been supervised by female officers increase in number, these officers will continue to be more accepted. And so, if not already, managers, other staff, and male inmates in the coming future may find the employment of both male and female officers in men's prisons a standard part of prison life.

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## Appendix 1: Interview Sheet – Applicants for Employment in Prisons.

### INTERVIEW SHEET

#### Applicants for Employment in Prisons

Name:-

Age:-

Address:-

Employment History:-

Appearance:-

Attitude at Interview:-

Maturity:-

Service in Armed Forces:-  
(Incl. details of rank etc.)

Why has he applied?:-

Is it to be a career?:-

Outside Interests (Sporting, cultural, reading etc.):-

Housing requirments:-

Height:-

Weight:-

Chest:-

Conjugal Status (incl. sex of children):-

General comments (Locality required etc.):-

Recommendation:-